Otis Pike and the CIA *Oriana Fallaci*

THE NEW REPUBLIC

Ambassador College
APR 1 1976

A Journal of Politics and the Arts—April 3, 1976, 60 cents

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Italy's Russian Sugar Daddies

Michael Ledeen & Claire Sterling

After Harold Wilson

David Blake

Robert Samuelson on Regulating Banks
Malcolm Muggeridge on Bertrand Russell
John Osborne on the Way to Kansas City
Robert A. Dahl on Presidential Elections

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TRB

from Washington ®
April 3, 1976

Pray to Mencken

The danger of what I will call the Henry L. Mencken complex is that the Washington reporter comes to the conclusion that the whole performance is put on for his personal entertainment, and is not to be taken seriously. It is an insinuating illusion. Nobody before or after Mencken could describe it so pungently, but he is gone.

When President Ford the other day at the West Wilkes High School Gymnasium, Wilkesboro, North Carolina, boasted about his handling of the celebrated *Mayaguez* affair, it needed a Mencken. When Mr. Ford's acting campaign manager, Stuart Spencer, cited Jimmy Carter's evangelical and faith-healing sister, Mrs. Ruth Carter Stapleton, last week as an illustration to prove that Carter is a "fundamentalist"—and then balked at trying to define "fundamentalist"—Mencken's ghost was there rubbing his hands at the erratic 1976 presidential performance. In fact, maybe, the entire American scene requires a Mencken.

I remember that far off day in Elwood, Indiana, with Mencken, waiting for Wilkie's acceptance speech, interviewing pompous master of ceremonies Homer Capehart about arrangements for servicing 300,000-or-so visitors in the little town on such matters, for example, as comfort stations (I think Joe Alsop was with us), and Capehart boasting that he had set lots of them, "each one a hundred-holer." Mencken could hardly wait to get out of the room to vent his exquisite satisfaction at this addition to the American Language.

Mencken should have been in the Wilkesboro audience when Mr. Ford said, "I think what I did in the case of the *Mayaguez* is a good example of the decisiveness that I can act with when we are faced with a problem. I could do it again."

He could do it in Cuba, for example. He and Kissinger ached to do it in Angola. But pussyfooting meanies in Congress blocked him. Yes, sir, he told the literati of Lenoir Rhyne College, Hickory, North Carolina, March 20, his proposal to spend $28 million to frustrate communism in Angola was cruelly thwarted. But for Congress, he told them, "Communism, whether it is the Soviet Union or Cuba, wouldn't be there today. That is unforgivable but that is the fact," he said.

Now that the Soviet Union "controls that very rich country," he added, "I think the American public wishes we had made that investment."

The *Mayaguez* affair for Americans in May a year ago was like balm to a smarting wound; we had lost Vietnam and were lost in humiliation and then decisive Mr. Ford bombed the hell out of Cambodia's Tang Island. He sank three Cambodian gunboats, struck the Sihanoukville oil depot (proved unused), and restored America's self-respect. "There are limits beyond which the United States cannot be pushed," said a proud Henry Kissinger. Thirty-four minutes after the US destroyer *Wilson* had reported that the American crew was all rescued the oil depot was struck. Over the protest of neighboring Thailand we used our base there to launch the attack on Cambodia and later apologized after Bangkok recalled its ambassador. (The Thai students remember it and are demanding that our troops leave now.) We rescued the 39 crewmen and lost only 38 or so servicemen in doing it. And, as Mencken would sardonically observe, with a glitter from his china-blue eyes, it restored Mr. Ford to his rightful role as national leader; in early May only 40 percent approved the way he was handling his office and 43 percent disapproved; after *Mayaguez* came the second sharpest jump upward ever recorded—11 points to 51 percent! (The sharpest gain, you will be glad to know, was the 17-point jump Nixon got in January 1973 after achieving Vietnam "peace.")

Can anybody doubt that a little chastisement of Cuba right now would send Mr. Ford's stock similarly soaring? There is a hateful little nation just asking to be kicked, and there is Mr. Ford in the high school gym proclaiming his decisiveness. It would make us all a little taller.

The other item Mencken would have enjoyed recently is this preliminary confrontation of Mr. Ford's campaign manager, the competent and professional Stuart Spencer, with the Jimmy Carter problem. The problem is such in Washington today that you can't so much as say "Jimmy" in a cocktail party but what all other conversation stops, and guests come bounding over to participate.

At a breakfast meeting with reporters last week campaign manager Spencer raised the baffling subject himself. It is here that journalists face the dangerous Mencken Syndrome; it is so much fun watching conventional politicians sweating over the soft-voiced, Twice-Born Carter, that we are apt to lose our objectivity a little and give the curious new kid a boost up just for the hell of it. Carter remarked in an interview here that he planned in his first week in office to pardon all the draft defectors: "I don't intend to criticize the young people who left the country," he said, "I'd just issue a blanket pardon without comment."

The country is worried about its future and its soul and here is a Baptist from Georgia who wins elections and stops George Wallace, and says he won't lie, and carries black wards and white wards in Southern states, and speaks without the slightest embarrassment about his relationship with Jesus. Manager Spencer noted the article about Carter's chic, handsome sister, the mother of four and mystic, who says she will put her own work aside "until Jimmy gets in the White House." There is a set of standards here, and a vocabulary, and a way of looking at things, that no other presidential candidate in modern times, I think, has offered. Manager Spencer advanced the word "fundamentalist," and then hastily retreated from it; religion, he said, hasn't been mixed up in a campaign since Kennedy broke through the barrier in 1960. And what is a fundamentalist, and is Carter one? The inquiring reporter is as uncertain as anybody. The most reassuring thing about Jimmy, perhaps, is his 78-year-old ex-Peace Corps mother, "Miss Lillian," who observed, "I told him to quit this stuff about never telling a lie, and being a Christian, and how he loves his wife more than the day he met her."

Can we scoff at this? Mencken, where are you?

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THE NEW REPUBLIC *A Journal of Politics and the Arts, Vol. 174, No. 14, Issue 3195, April 3, 1976. Published weekly (except the issues of January 3, July 10, August 14, August 28) and distributed by* The New Republic, *1220 19th Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20036. Phone 331-7494. Single copy, 60¢; Yearly subscriptions, $21; foreign, $24; students, $14. Send all remittances and correspondence about subscriptions, undelivered copies and changes of address to Subscription Department,* The New Republic, *381 West Center Street, Marion, Ohio 43302.* *Copyright 1976 by The New Republic, Inc.* *Item g. Second class postage paid at Washington, DC and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Reader's Guide.*

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Bloodhound Or Lapdog?

One of the sorriest orphans of the Watergate storm is the Federal Election Commission (FEC). Last week it lost its authority and effectively went out of business—just two years after it was created to end corruption in American politics once and for all. Its mandate ran out on March 22, and no one came to its rescue. Congress, which created the commission in the campaign law amendments of 1974, also created the conditions for its demise by inviting the Supreme Court to rule hastily on the constitutionality of the law. The Court, in an unprecedented decision (See "Campaign Spending" by Nathan Lewin, *TNR*, February 14), accepted the invitation, declared the FEC unconstitutional and set a deadline of February 29 for its revision. When Congress failed to meet the deadline, the Court granted a reprieve until March 22. And when the second deadline passed, the Court refused to grant a second delay. As a result the commission is officially defunct.

Congress at this writing has not drafted legislation that will recreate the FEC in a form that satisfies both the Supreme Court and President Ford. The President, who now has a second chance to scuttle the FEC, promises to veto any bill that proposes anything other than a simple extension of the FEC's authority with minimal changes to comply with the Court's complaints. He wants a bill that would give the President authority to appoint all six FEC commissioners—as required by the Court—but would do nothing more. Congress, as always, has a more elaborate plan. The House bill, a 58-page list of qualifications, second thoughts and mid-campaign "improvements" in the law, should not and will not take effect in its present form. The Senate has been more realistic: the most recent compromise bill sponsored by majority leader Mike Mansfield and minority leader Hugh Scott comes much closer to what the President wants.

Despite the general agreement in Congress that something must be done to keep the FEC going at least for the rest of this year, the commission is in real trouble. It has no influential friends clamoring for its preservation. Congress has soured on it; the Court has called it unconstitutional; the President, who opposed its creation, is not keen to revive it; big labor and big business would yawn and look the other way if it died. The FEC's best hope for survival may lie in the fact that it has distributed only a fraction of the public funds it planned to give out

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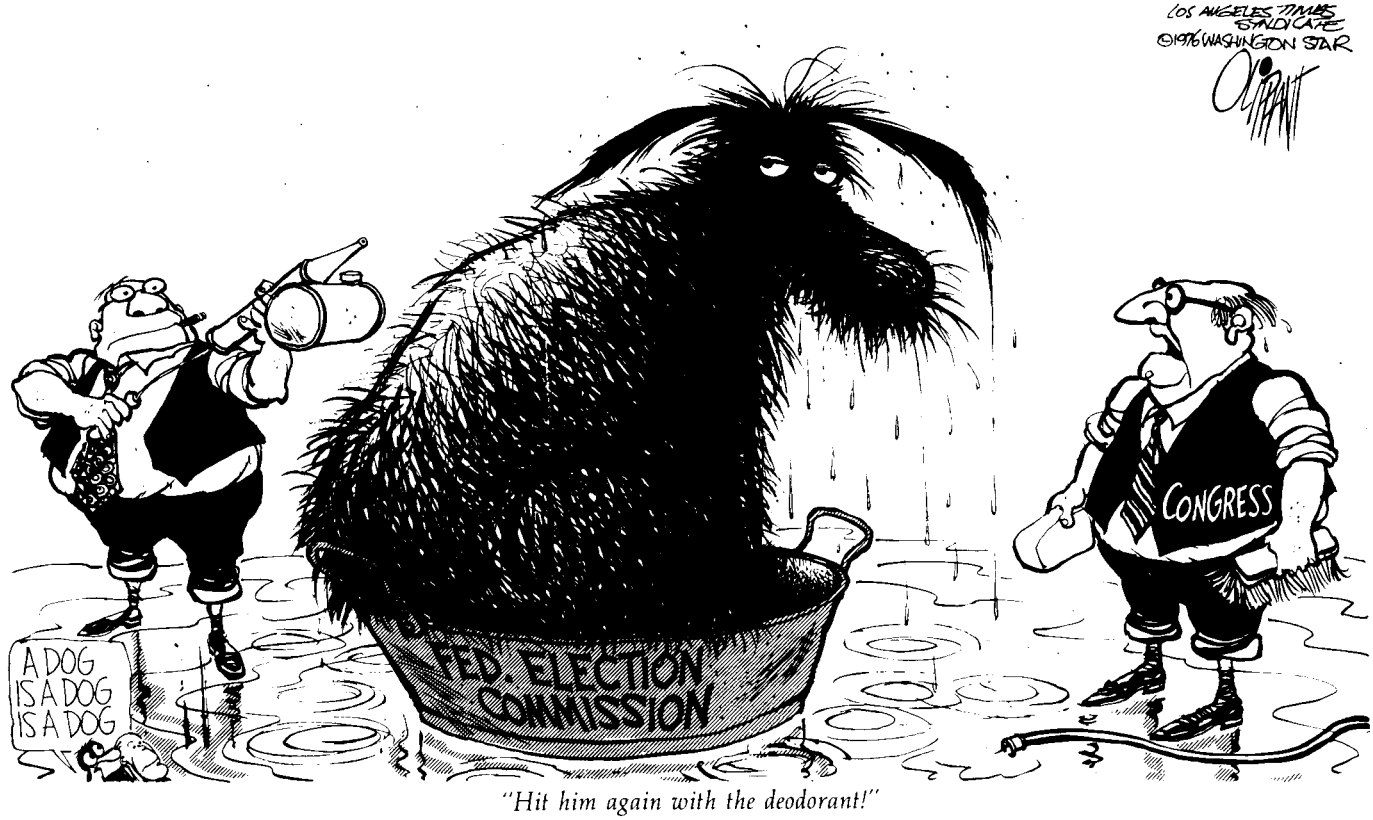
this election year, and the candidates still need the cash. Democratic presidential candidates would suffer more from a cutoff of funds than would President Ford, especially the ones who haven't gained much momentum, such as Frank Church and Mo Udall. In addition, the Democratic Party would be hurt more than the Republican because it has collected only one quarter of the $2 million it is due to get from the FEC in 1976, while the Republicans have already collected a third of theirs. President Ford needs money for his campaign, but now that the Reagan threat has diminished somewhat, Ford may find it easier to tap private sources of cash. Many congressional Democrats believe that Ford would not hesitate to veto the FEC bill if it doesn't meet his requirements.

Unfortunately an FEC of the sort envisioned in the House bill probably deserves to fail. It is, first of all, an attempt to rewrite the rules in the midst of the game, something Congress promised not to do. And second, it represents a case of fraudulent advertising. While the law that created the FEC changed the standards of politicking in the US by requiring that candidates disclose the source of their campaign money and limiting the influence of wealthy contributors, it also set some bad precedents. Chief among these was the design of the FEC bureaucracy itself. Conceived as an independent watchdog that would track down political fraud and punish miscreants without regard to their status, the FEC instead is developing rather quickly into another flabby Washington agency. It's being taught by Congress' forceful example not to meddle in business it doesn't understand, not to act on its own initiative, not to harass any politicians but those generally agreed to be beyond the pale. FEC investigators have already been accused of being "nonpoliticians," and therefore insensitive to the special problems of those they regulate. And Rep. Wayne Hays, chairman of the House Administration Committee and sponsor of the new FEC bill, said he would arrest FEC investigators if he found them snooping around in his district. With leadership like this, one would expect the FEC to wither quickly. As is true of so many reform programs, the FEC simply duplicates an agency that's already assigned to enforce the same area of law, but doesn't replace the original enforcers. The original agency in this instance is the Justice Department. In nearly three quarters of a century of enforcing campaign laws, the Department's elections unit has compiled a very meager courtroom record. It has a tolerant outlook. Can we expect much more of the FEC?

The early signs aren't encouraging. Although the staff of the FEC is trying to create the sort of agency Congress promised, Congress is trying to trim the staff's independence. When the process is complete (if the agency is brought back to life) most aggressive workers will have moved on to other things, and the hulk of an agency they leave behind will be about as exciting as the Federal Maritime Commission. The trend is already visible. When Congress created the FEC it added a catch phrase in the law requiring the commission to send all of its regulations to Congress for final approval before making them law. No other regulatory body does this, but then no other agency regulates politicians. Congress in this way was a step ahead of every other vested interest in town: it captured its regulators even before they were hired.



"Hit him again with the deodorant!"

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White House Watch

Ford's Way

On the road to the Republican nomination in Kansas City, a nomination that this reporter still expects Mr. Ford to get despite Ronald Reagan's first primary victory in North Carolina, the President continues to reveal a great deal about himself, his White House and his way of trying to run and lead the country.

A common supposition, one that Reagan himself advanced as a reason for staying in the race when he along with many others was misreading his own strength in North Carolina and assuming that he was going to lose and Gerald Ford was going to win the fourth primary in a row, is that he is driving candidate Ford to the right, toward more conservative positions than the President would otherwise take. This is a distortion of what has actually been happening. Mr. Ford has not taken a single "conservative" position for campaign purposes that he didn't already hold or wouldn't have taken in the natural course of the conservatism that he has practiced and exemplified ever since he entered Congress in 1949. What he has been doing of late, in response to Reagan and in appeal to the conservative voters whom the President must attract if he is to be nominated and elected, is expressing his basic and natural conservative views more vigorously and more often than he might be doing if he were not campaigning.

A possible exception to the foregoing generalization is the President's recent dumping of the term "détente" and his simultaneous argument that he isn't dumping the policy with the term while toughening his verbal stance toward the Soviet Union. But it can be argued—I think, demonstrated—that the seeming exception is more apparent than real and that there's been no actual and meaningful change in US policy toward the Soviet Union since the campaign heated up. Long before Ronald Reagan declared his candidacy, at a time when some of the President's political advisers were under the illusion that he as the incumbent, appointed though he was, could have the nomination for the asking, he prepared and submitted to Congress the first of what he continues to call with pride the two biggest defense budgets in US history. So recently as March 22 in Dallas, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger set forth once more "compelling reasons" for pursuing the strategic arms limitation talks (SALT) with the Soviet Union that since 1972 have been at the core of the détente policy. This part of the speech was overshadowed in the news by the Secretary's insistence, matching the President's recent and occasionally exaggerated talk along the same line, that "we are not the world's policeman—but we cannot permit the Soviet Union or its surrogates to become the world's policeman, either"; and, in a reference to Angola, that "the United States will not accept further Cuban military interventions abroad." This sort of bellicose talk, unsupported by any believable indication of what the US would do if the Soviet Union and its Cuban surrogate persisted in Africa or elsewhere in what Kissinger called the "adventurism" and "military expansionism" that were successfully practiced in Angola, worried such friends and frequent apologists for the Secretary as James Reston of *The New York Times*. But the toughened talk indicated no substantive departure from the search for US-Soviet accommodation that the President first refused to label "détente" last August. One of the assumptions underlying the policy since its inception has been that the Soviet Union must and, given proper incentive by the US, will restrain its expansive tendencies. People who have trouble reconciling the policy with basic conservatism should remember that the father of the policy in its recent form was Richard Nixon.

A factor in the Ford campaign performance that's received very little attention in the media is what's been happening at the White House. The essence of what's been happening there is that the presidential operation in both its governmental and political dimensions has improved since Donald Rumsfeld replaced Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger and was replaced as White House staff chief by his former deputy, Richard Cheney. The President's White House people are reluctant to discuss the fact, much less acknowledge and explain it. It doesn't necessarily reflect upon Rumsfeld—practically all of the assistants who are functioning more smoothly and efficiently now than they did when he was there were assigned to their jobs by him. Rumsfeld is a professional politician who transferred from Congress to the executive at President Nixon's urging in 1969. He largely directed Gerald Ford's early campaign for the nomination. In the opinion of some of his former White House associates, he quietly encouraged the President's decision to fire James Schlesinger and welcomed his appointment as Defense Secretary in the belief that it would further his political ambitions. Yet the White House end of the Ford political operation under Cheney, a non-politician, is unquestionably functioning better than it did under Rumsfeld, the politician. Jerry Jones, a Nixon holdover who was brought into the center of the White House operation by Gen. Alexander Haig, Nixon's last staff chief, has risen steadily in position and influence under Rumsfeld and lately under Cheney. Jones heads a so-called "scheduling committee" that has expanded its role since Rumsfeld left and coordinates a wide range of presidential activities, both administrative and political. Mr. Ford's overt campaign instrument, the President Ford Committee, must clear all of its recommendations for campaign appearances and other endeavors through the Jones committee. The ultimate recommendations go to the President through Cheney, a quiet fellow whose air of calm restraint is in sharp contrast

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with Rumsfeld's rather uptight nature and demeanor. The only coherent explanation of the recent improvement that I've heard at the White House is that "the fear of Rumsfeld" left with Rumsfeld and that the working atmosphere around Cheney is friendlier, more relaxed and therefore more efficient than it was under his patron and predecessor. The judgment is probably unfair to Rumsfeld but circumstances suggest that it's not wholly off the mark.

The improvement hasn't been total and the responsibility for the two most glaring of recent blunders rests with the President. One of them was his insistence, against much inner-circle advice, upon retaining former congressman and Secretary of the Army Howard ("Bo") Callaway at the head of the President Ford Committee and trying to paper over Callaway's deficiencies with the appointment of a theoretically subordinate political director, Stuart Spencer, a political technician who had a lot to do with engineering Ronald Reagan's election and reelection as governor of California. Callaway is a thoroughly likable Georgia politician and millionaire. The kindest thing to be said of him is that he is possessed of more good humor than intelligence. He recalls in his engaging fashion that he told Mr. Ford last summer: "Look, Mr. President, I know that I'm a good Secretary of the Army, but I'm not at all sure that I'd make a good campaign manager." He didn't. The committee's Washington headquarters and some of its state extensions were in shambles before Spencer was brought in last September. The later appointment of Rogers C.B. Morton, a former Maryland congressman and Secretary of Interior and Commerce, as a White House counsellor and campaign adviser, also helped. But the President was not persuaded to rid himself of Callaway until his bumbling efforts to further the family interests—specifically a Colorado ski resort—through federal favors while he was Secretary of the Army, a Republican national committeeman and lately the President's campaign chairman were disclosed.

The other blunder was the handling of Richard Nixon's report upon his recent visit to China. The White House handling of the report was exceeded in stupidity only by the handling of the visit itself, a comedy that was described in some detail in this journal's March 20 issue. The stupidity stemmed in both instances from the President's insistence that the visit and anything that might be learned from it be minimized in every possible way, lest the sudden reemergence of Richard Nixon remind voters of Watergate and the Nixon pardon and be politically harmful to Mr. Ford. According to Jack Brennan, the head of Nixon's small staff at San Clemente and his companion on the China trip, the former President was well aware of the effort to derogate the venture and determined during the flight home that he would report only to Henry Kissinger, who had treated the event with more respect than the President and his spokesmen had.

By prearrangement with Kissinger, and with the President's knowledge and assent, Nixon prepared a written report of his conversations with Mao Tse-tung, Acting Premier Hua Kuo-feng, and other Chinese leaders. Kissinger knew on Monday, March 8, that Nixon, then back in San Clemente, was at work on the report and expected to have it delivered to the Secretary of State the following weekend. Warren ("Bill") Gulley, the White House assistant assigned to liaison with San Clemente, flew there on the weekend, partly by military and partly by commercial aircraft, and delivered two copies of the report to Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, the President's assistant for national security affairs, on Monday the 15th. Scowcroft gave Kissinger the copy marked for him that day. Scowcroft gave Mr. Ford the second copy the next day.

Press Secretary Ron Nessen and Robert Funseth, Kissinger's chief spokesman at the State Department, learned only on the following Monday, the 22nd, that the report had been received. They learned it from *Time*. Nessen, acutely embarrassed, said the second copy had been "addressed to the President." It was not addressed to the President. Scowcroft appears to have elected to give it to the President and to have read it before he passed it to Mr. Ford. CIA Director George Bush read it in Scowcroft's office after the President read it. Nixon had stipulated that distribution of the report be tightly restricted, that no copies be made, and that the two originals be returned to him. Brennan agreed with Gulley by telephone that the originals might as well be returned by ordinary mail instead of sent back to San Clemente by courier. Nessen quoted the President as saying the report was "very interesting and useful." Funseth quoted Kissinger to the same effect. It is inconceivable that the report of some 60 pages would have been mailed back to Nixon if it contained anything of vital national security interest. Classified intelligence information that may interest the former President is reviewed by White House Counsellor John Marsh, encoded, and transmitted to Nixon over a secured electronic circuit every two weeks or so. His China report did not require such care.

The extraordinary secrecy and reticence connected with the report's receipt, reading and return raised great storms in the White House and State Department press rooms. The affair probably interested the public far less than it interested Washington journalists. But it renewed an old and recently repaired rift between Nessen and Gen. Scowcroft and caused the President to censure Scowcroft, one of the ablest men at the White House, for failing to inform Nessen. Mr. Ford should have censured himself. He didn't inform Nessen, either, and the whole absurdity was essentially his doing.

John Osborne

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Less Socialism and No More Harold Wilson

London

Britain's ruling Labour party has to find a new leader to replace its retiring Premier Harold Wilson, but all the indications are that, for the moment at least, they are unlikely to change their policy radically. Of the four contenders in the first ballot, two are on the left of the party and four are on the right. But even the left's leading champion, Michael Foot, is expected to keep the government firmly committed to the broad outlines of economic policy that have been worked out by the Wilson administration with the trade union movement. Indeed, Foot himself has been one of the main architects of the policy, which has combined pay restraint with a series of measures aimed at boosting the confidence of the private sector rather than increasing the scale of state intervention.

For the real legacy that Harold Wilson has left his party is to swing it around in the past year from the left-wing stance of the manifesto on which it won office without provoking a breach with any of its important power centers. Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the recent decision to cut public expenditure in the coming years on a whole range of programs. Public spending on welfare, education and health has long been one of the deepest beliefs of the Labour party, with an appeal strongest to the left but reaching far beyond that group onto the center and the right. Yet not only did the government cut spending, it went out of its way to say that it had done so. In part this was to appease those in financial circles, who worry about the huge government budget deficit; but more important was a feeling that there had been a change of mood in the country as a whole. There is now widespread criticism of the alleged overmanning in the civil service, and a general feeling that although schools, welfare and health care are all very well, they are things that we cannot afford to provide lavishly at a time when the industrial base of the country is clearly crumbling. It is the failure of the left, which can fairly claim to have warned against de-industrialization, to gain any advantage from this mood that is the most striking feature of the past year.

The left-wing policy is clear, and for a period just after the October election of 1974 it looked as if it were being carried out. It has been most clearly articulated by Tony Benn, who is the only candidate to have taken up any public policy stance in the current leadership election and who, partly because of this, is generally thought to have no chance of winning. The left-wing policy starts out from a belief that the United Kingdom's economy is facing a double crisis. In the short term, it is suffering from the world recession, which came here late but has come with extreme virulence. The short-term measures to be adopted are thus clear. The government should have acted much sooner to stop unemployment from rising, and ought to act now to bring it down faster than it seems likely to fall. These are exactly the policies that Benn tried to follow as industry minister. Using government money he backed a whole series of factories facing closure, either by nationalizing them or by financing the workers to go into business on their own. In trying to do this he was, in fact, going against the whole drift of government policy, and most of his efforts failed. After he was moved out of the industry department, following the EEC referendum where the left suffered a major reverse, the workers' cooperatives were quietly allowed to die as part of a major tightening in attitude toward assisting ailing industries.

Benn's followers claim that there was more to the policy of shoring up industry than the immediate task of saving jobs. Over the past few years there has been a dramatic collapse in the scale of British industry. During the recession investment has been cut back so that when good times come there is just not the capacity to make the goods required. British firms thus fail to make the profits they need to finance new investment. It is a vicious spiral that now seems to be getting out of hand.

The left's answer to this is, first of all, to limit the damage done by the recession. They want to stimulate the economy and protect firms from closure. Then, as the recovery begins to pick up, they would start pumping money into the manufacturing sector not just to help it survive but to make it grow. The most concrete example of this approach is the rescue scheme for British Leyland, which involves spending two million dollars over the next few years to re-equip its aging plant. No one on the left would deny that such a policy, applied across the board, would cause severe problems, most strikingly to the balance of payments. To ease the deficit, which always comes with a boom in Britain, they would impose import controls, risking the wrath of other countries and protecting home manufacturers during what ought to be a period of recuperation.

Some unions have shown interest in that part of the policy, but the left came unstuck over two other issues. These are the exact form the state intervention in industry should take and what to do about inflation. Although Labour is committed to what it calls "social ownership" (which usually means nationalization) of the commanding heights of the economy, a majority of its leaders still want a large private sector running most of industry. So, when it became clear in late 1974 that the whole corporate sector was on the verge of bankruptcy, the government was faced with a difficult choice. If it followed through the Labour policy of saying that any aid granted to a company must be matched by a share stake, it would have found itself taking over virtually the whole of industry at a

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knockdown price. It chose instead to change the tax laws so that corporations have effectively been relieved of all their tax liabilities, which has not only poured money back into the privately-owned sector, but done it without the need to be seen handing money over. With the threat of mass unemployment hanging over their members, the unions were in no mood to quarrel about the niceties of Socialist principle. But from that decision, the National Enterprise Board taking stakes in major companies, has been diluted to a holding company with a ragbag of state holdings that nobody wants and that is not allowed to move without approval from the private sector.

Proposals the left hoped would result in mandatory agreements being signed by all major companies about their actions in the coming years have all but disappeared. Instead, the government now hopes to make vague voluntary deals with a few firms.

The reason that the left has been powerless to protest these shifts in policy is that the union movement has acquiesced in them as part of the larger strategy for ensuring the survival of the Labour government. Many of the union leaders are left-wingers themselves, like Jack Jones, boss of Britain's biggest union, the Transport Workers. Jones is more than just the country's most powerful union boss. He is also a deeply idealistic Socialist who has long supported the Tribune group of left-wing MPs. But he is also the architect of the government wage restraint policy, which he sees as the only way to combat inflation. It is the failure of left-wingers to realize that the unions were swinging around in favor of such an anti-inflation policy, with a union-policed limit of $12 a week on pay increases, that has done more than anything to weaken their position. This is because union leaders are, above all, concerned with finding a workable solution for the short-term problems the country faces, of which inflation is the most serious. In their desire to maintain unity with union leaders, the left went on defending pay raises of 30 percent and up long after it was clear the unions' mood had turned against them.

The real challenge from the left, then, cannot come now or for some time yet. If the economy does not turn up, or if it does and it becomes clear that the government strategy of bolstering confidence and hoping that the private sector will invest more is not producing results, then the left in the Labour party will be in a strong position to mount a challenge to the effective ruling group of Foot, Jones and Healey, who whatever their differences on the longer term are agreed on what needs to be done now. But if that kind of economic setback overtakes this government, then its prospects of survival look bleak indeed. The broad outlines of the economic policy that will lead Labour into the next election have been laid down, and they represent a pretty right-wing program in Labour party terms. They also are the only kind of programs that can realistically be expected from a party facing the most serious economic crisis in the history of the UK at a time when it is clear that there is still no consensus to introduce a great leap forward into socialism.

David Blake

Mr. Blake is foreign editor of business news at *The Times* (London).

An Oriana Fallaci Interview

Otis Pike and the CIA

One has to read the Pike report, even the censored version we have, in order to understand the indignation of the man who stood up against the CIA and Kissinger and the President of the United States. One has to meet Otis Pike to see the repressed tears that occasionally moisten his eyes, and comprehend the abberrant forms power can take—power dressed in the uniforms of a manifest tyranny, power dressed in the suits of hypocritical tolerance. In either case opposing power serves only to keep alive a dream or keep our conscience clean. Bitter surprises crush those who think they'll win, like Don Quixote, acting the hero.

Otis Pike isn't exactly a hero. If he were, he would have faced to the end the consequences of his congressional investigation. He would have risked his seat in Congress and probably lost it; he would have

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thrown it away. He would have published his original report without asking anybody's permission and without censoring it and without all the circumlocutions. Finally, he would have pursued legal action against Henry Kissinger. "What could happen to you if you did all that?" I asked him. "I would have been expelled from the Congress, I guess. And I would for sure have lost the next election," he answered. But he didn't persist. At a certain point, fatigued and bitter, he gave up. He turned the whole thing over to the House of Representatives, hence to the President. Maybe my judgment is naive (politics is not naive), but the fact remains that once in a while it would be good to have some naive heroes who die jousting with windmills.

Not exactly a hero, Otis Pike is something of a martyr. One can't expect everybody to stay in with the lions. (A certain lion named Henry Kissinger doesn't joke when he bites. He tears flesh from bone. And when he attacks he has all the power of the Establishment: at home and abroad. Abroad, some buddies like Brezhnev and Mao Tse-tung). One can't expect people to be saints, to give up everything and go live in a cave. Otis Pike himself belongs to the Establishment. He is not a grenade thrower who aims to change the society or peoples' minds. He isn't even a radical ready to go on hunger strikes to protest. Nor does he claim to be. He introduces himself as what he is: a good American citizen of the good American bourgeoisie, a good congressman who believes in the homely values of his youth. I mean God, the family, country, money well spent, democracy and freedom. I may be wrong, but somehow he reminds me of the character in an old movie by Frank Capra, like *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington.* You know, the one with James Stewart leaving for Washington with his faith and his stubbornness and his provincialism, to cause trouble and to be defeated.

Pike's story justifies the analogy. He was born 55 years ago at Riverhead, NY, in the house where he still lives. During World War II, he was a Marine Corps pilot who spent 14 months dive-bombing in the Solomon Islands campaign, nine months nightfighting over Peleliu and Okinawa, occupying Peking. The war ended for him after 120 combat missions, five air medals and the rank of captain. He's been married since 1946 to the same woman, Doris Orth, and is so devoted to her that during my interview with him took only calls from her: "I'm always here for my wife." He has three children, all successful adults. He was graduated *magna cum laude* from Princeton and has several honorary degrees. He's a lawyer. He can navigate a boat, play a piano and a ukulele, catch a swordfish, play ping pong, sing a song, swing an axe. He's been a Democratic congressman since 1960, reelected every two years by one of the most conservative counties in the North: Suffolk County, NY. He's a product of the system, and a faithful one. For years he didn't even oppose the war in Vietnam. In 1973 he did vote against the bombings in Cambodia. But his criticism was never aimed at Kissinger. He was convinced that Kissinger was a great man. He continued to be convinced until the inquest.

It's this Mr.-Smith-Goes-to-Washington innocence that seduces people like me; people who don't often trust promises, who think chatter about God and the family and country is foolishness, people who make Machiavelli possible and who fight only (when they fight) out of despair and rage and exasperation: knowing very well that the world changes but remains the same. It is Pike's late discovery of a truth complacently ignored for so long that makes him and others like him so respectable and likable. I did like Otis Pike from the moment I entered his office in the Rayburn building where he sat framed by a window that opened on the Capitol's dome. I liked his good-natured face, his hair so blond as to look white. I liked his carelessness in dress and movement, the nonchalant sloppiness of someone who always wears wrinkled trousers or jackets with a button missing. I liked his resonant voice, the voice of a preacher who claims to believe in the triumph of justice. And more than anything I liked his handcuffed sorrowful anger: "I hadn't understood that they were lying to me, that they were making fun of me." I interviewed him with empathy, I forgave him his reticence. He was cautious; I suspected he was saying much less than he could. A secret fear that he would never admit made his lips quiver. A fear of what "they" had done to him and still could do to him. They, the powerful.

Oriana Fallaci: Mr. Pike, in his interview, William Colby stated that your report on the CIA is partial, and written to give a false impression of CIA. He also said it doesn't contain all of what he said.

Otis Pike: Good Lord, no. If we were going to print everything he had said, it would be his report and not ours. We were certainly not asked to write a report which would meet the approval of the CIA. Of course Mr. Colby is not going to like it. We said that the CIA did a lousy job. We said that they missed their basic mission, which was to provide good intelligence to the United States. So we did not expect him to thank us when we got finished. Yet, I don't care what he says about me. I ended my investigation with a higher regard for the CIA than for the people who told them what to do.

Fallaci: You're referring to Dr. Kissinger, aren't you?

Pike: Listen, I don't have any problem in admitting that when I finished my investigation I liked Dr. Kissinger enormously less than when I started it. With Kissinger it was a real problem to get access to information. Dr. Kissinger takes the position that all of his communications, not only those with the heads of foreign

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governments, but with other employees of the State Department are very personal. So the Congress should not be looking at them. As for Mr. Colby . . . Well, Mr. Colby is a very bright man and he knows how to play with words. But he isn't dishonest.

Fallaci: Do you mean that William Colby has been a scapegoat?

Pike: To a very large extent, yes. Sure. I do think that. Though I also think that he loved it. I told it to him, one day. I said: "You do love being the scapegoat, don't you?" He didn't answer. He just sat there. But it was so clear that he relished the role in which he was cast. Besides, nobody could have done it any better and with better results. Honest to us, loyal to his people . . . He won. And I lost.

Fallaci: In what sense did you lose?

Pike: In the most evident one: my report hasn't been published. They suppressed it. When the House of Representatives said that it couldn't be published until the President had determined that there was nothing in it that would affect foreign intelligence activities, it was clear that I had lost.

Fallaci: But who wanted the House of Representatives' vote that put everything into the hands of the President?

Pike: The White House. The State Department. The administration. Dr. Kissinger, of course. And a lot of people in the Congress, too. All the people, I mean, who liked the way oversight had been conducted in the past and who were very unhappy with our committee. They found any kind of excuse. The inopportunity of having a disagreement with the President was an excuse. The Welch case was another excuse . . . People asked me: "Are there names of CIA people in your report?" And I answered: "Yes, there are names, of course, but they are only the names of those who came to testify before our committee as representatives of the CIA". But all the same they acted very concerned. No name, they said, should come out to identify people who could get involved in some other Welch case. Those papers did not contain everything we knew. We had taken things out of them. We had taken out names. We, too, didn't want to get anybody killed.

Fallaci: Let's face it, Mr. Pike. Some of the fault is yours. Why did you have to ask permission to print your report? Did you have to ask the President's permission?

Pike: My personal judgement is that we did not have to ask the permission of the President. But I had to bring the case in the Congress. Thanks to the obstacles and delays imposed on us, we ran out of time at the end. We didn't have time to finish our report. I had to ask the House of Representatives to give us more time; I only needed two weeks. And they held the extra time as hostage to not publishing the report.

Fallaci: Yes, and it seems to me that the whole thing is a hell of a hypocrisy. If they didn't want the truth to be published, then why did they ask you to do the investigation? Just to throw smoke in the eyes of Americans?

Pike: I couldn't agree more. Hypocrisy is the word.

Fallaci: Who has the uncensored version of your report?

Pike: The President has it. Dr. Kissinger has it. The CIA has it. The CIA had everything we had all the time. They got our first draft the same day the members of our committee got it, at my insistence. I wanted them to tell me if there were any factual errors in it . . . Finally, four committees of the House of Representatives have it. And any member of the House can go and look at it, if he agrees not to reveal anything that is in it. But not many want to read it.

Fallaci: Why?

Pike: Oh, they think it is better not to know. There are too many things that embarrass Americans in that report. You see, this country went through an awful trauma with Watergate. But, even then, all they were asked to believe was that their President had been a bad person. In this new situation they are asked much more; they are asked to believe that their country has been evil. And nobody wants to believe that.

Fallaci: The most baffling thing, in my opinion, is this pseudo-innocence of yours. Because all these reports confirm things that, in the rest of the world, we already knew. Take the example of Castro. He kept saying that the CIA tried to kill him and you didn't believe it.

Pike: Right. And it turned out that it was true. The same thing happened with Cambodia. The press wrote about it, but the average citizen did not believe it. Even the average congressman, the average senator, did not believe it. They only believed what the government said. I was one of them. It took this investigation to convince me that I had always been told lies, to make me realize that I was tired of being told lies.

Fallaci: Let's go back to the hypocrisy problem, Mr. Pike. Where did the major difficulties come from?

Pike: The basic problem as I saw it came from the President, from the Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger, from the head of the CIA, from the FBI, and from the administration in general. They were always promising complete cooperation and they were always holding back information. They knew all the time that the life of our committee was limited. So they would give us what I call the dribble-treatment. When we said: "we need those documents," they did not necessarily refuse them. They gave us one piece of paper. Just one. So we had to ask again for the others, and wait again for

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another piece of paper. They would dribble out papers one at a time. And we never got the documents we wanted.

Fallaci: Yet Kissinger came to testify.

Pike: We only had him one day, in the morning and in the afternoon. The report speaks for itself. I tried as hard as I could to make him tell what we needed to know. He always went back to his "very personal communications." I was prepared to cite Dr. Kissinger for contempt of Congress. I voted three resolutions to cite Dr. Kissinger for contempt. But the majority of the members of the Congress did not want to proceed. They would have had to choose between Dr. Kissinger and me, or between Dr. Kissinger and our committee. And nobody wanted a confrontation with him.

Fallaci: But why is everybody so scared of Kissinger?

Pike: I don't know. I really don't. All I can say is that I am not. The fact is that he has many horses, that Kissinger. He is a tremendously astute public relations man. When things don't go as he would like, he calls up his buddies in the media and he gets powerful editorials. As a matter of fact, he mounted an attack against our committee, thanks to his buddies. And since then support has dwindled.

Fallaci: Why didn't you go after Kissinger yourself, alone? Why didn't you take him to court?

Pike: I could have. But it would have taken too long. Our courts don't move rapidly enough, and the life of the committee would have expired before we got an answer. I had to give up and bear all those obstructions. They even silenced witnesses. They told them flatly that they couldn't talk about certain things. They said: "You cannot even be interviewed without having a representative of the State Department in the room."

Fallaci: But in the case of the covert operations, from whom did the CIA have to take orders? Apart from the President.

Pike: From the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

Fallaci: Kissinger.

Pike: Right. Then, from the Secretary of Defense and from the Secretary of State.

Fallaci: Kissinger.

Pike: Right. Then from the National Security Council.

Fallaci: Which Kissinger belongs to.

Pike: Right. What I mean is that the CIA can do by itself only some little tiny noncontroversial things. It cannot take any initiative on its own. I do not agree with Sen. Church when he refers to the CIA as a rogue elephant. I came to the conclusion that the CIA did things somebody told it to do.

Fallaci: Mr. Pike, I have to ask you something else. Do you think that Kissinger is democratic?

Pike: No. I won't equivocate. The answer is no. First of all I think that Dr. Kissinger has very little respect for the Congress. And we may deserve very little respect, but the point is that he has very little respect for democratic processes too. Oh, yes, he's really impatient with democracy; he is not as good at democracy as he is at diplomacy. And we simply cannot have a man in his capacity, no matter how brilliant he may be, who is unwilling to accept the majority's views, claiming that he knows better.

Fallaci: Tell me, Mr. Pike, did this investigation hurt your political career?

Pike: I don't know yet. I will not know until the elections. Maybe.

Fallaci: Do you feel or did you feel that the CIA would spy on you?

Pike: Yes, I felt that during the investigation. But I didn't let it change anything I did. Now, don't take it that I had any evidence that they were spying on me. There are all kinds and degrees of spying. I have a hunch that the CIA knew all about me: what I like and what I dislike, what my eating habits and my drinking habits are, and other very personal things. I think they know me back and forth and sideways. But I don't fault them for that. An intelligence agency which is being investigated by a congressman would be sort of missing its own duty if it didn't find out what that congressman is like.

Fallaci: The leaks must have hurt you a lot.

Pike: A hell of a lot. They hurt the credibility of the committee, they hurt me personally as chairman of the committee, they hurt the concept of congressional oversight and the intelligence agencies in general. They benefited only the CIA and the top people. I would strongly support legislation punishing the leakers. Now, having said that, I will also say that if I had to choose between an assassination or a policy of assassinations and a leak that stops assassinations, I'd prefer the leaks.

Fallaci: Colby denies the CIA had anything to do with the leaks.

Pike: Well, having seen what the CIA is capable of, I wouldn't say they are incapable of leaking a newspaper story. It is quite possible, believe me.

Fallaci: Mr. Pike, there is one point that leaves me bewildered in your judgement of the CIA. The incapability of the CIA to predict a surprise attack in case of war.

Pike: If you talk about a surprise attack like Pearl

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Harbor, or one over some installation of ours somewhere in the world, we certainly wouldn't know about it from the CIA. I have seen nothing that could give me confidence in that sense. Probably our best intelligence in this regard is in Europe. In spite of what happened in Czechoslovakia, when we simply lost the Russian army for two weeks, I expect that we would know more in Europe. We have improved there, I guess, in seven years. But elsewhere! The Arab-Israeli war episode is discouraging. All right, it took place in an area where we are not immediately involved . . . where we have no bases or troops, I mean. Yet our intelligence was awful. Absolutely awful. Just imagine, after the war had already started, for three or four hours the CIA kept saying: "Nothing is going to happen."

Fallaci: Colby says that your statements on this subject are irresponsible. He says that the CIA is the best intelligence operation in the world.

Pike: We did not start this investigation with the preconceived intention of revealing only their failures. I can assure you that. After we had looked at the money they spent, I said to the members of the committee: "Now we are going to examine the results." And I asked them to suggest situations which were important from the point of view of American foreign policy and it turned out that, in everything, the CIA had done badly. We chose the Tet offensive in Vietnam, the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, the Arab-Israeli war in 1973, the coup in Cyprus, the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, the Indian nuclear explosion, the coup in Portugal. And we found that in no way did the American taxpayer get value for what his intelligence cost. In all of those seven cases, the CIA performed badly, did a lousy job.

Fallaci: The time has come for me to taste my dessert—I mean the Italian covert action story. Does your report say everything there is to say about the pay-off in my country?

Pike: To the best of my knowledge, yes. Aside from the names, I would say yes.

Fallaci: Do you think we will ever know those names officially?

Pike: I have no idea. But I have mixed feelings about it. I mean, if I were a member of the Italian parliament . . . and the allegation had been made that some members of the Italian parliament had received campaign contributions from the CIA, and I had not received any contribution from the CIA, I would want those names to be published in order to clear my personal reputation. On the other hand, if I had accepted a campaign contribution from the CIA, and if I felt that this had helped to get me elected but in no sense had diminished my loyalty to [my country] then I would think it terribly unfair to see my name published. Because my life would be in danger.

Fallaci: Are you speaking like those who suppressed your report, Mr Pike? Are you using Richard Welch's death as an excuse? Come on! There is a hell of a difference between an agent and somebody who takes money.

Pike: You say that there is a hell of a difference but someone killed Mr. Welch. You cannot rationalize everything because assassins are not rational people. I am not sure that anyone of those who took money from the CIA would be safe from terrorists.

Fallaci: What has paying off foreign politicians to do with your national security? What is this national security?

Pike: I guess it means the essential strength of the nation. And, in that sense, I can see how they might consider certain payoffs as connected to the national security. Yes, I can. You see, the basic fear in America, as far as the Italian Communists are concerned, is that if they won an election there would never be another election.

Fallaci: But the problem remains, as I said to Colby, that we want to take care of this in our way because we are not a colony of yours.

Pike: I couldn't agree more. Absolutely. The problem is: to what extent do the Soviets finance the Italian Communist Party? And what kind of policy do we Americans follow there?

Fallaci: A last question Mr. Pike. How did you feel when you discovered that part of your money had gone to the Italian neo-Fascists? Did you reproach anyone?

Pike: Of course, America does not have the right to do that. But reproaching someone after the fact isn't terribly useful. The goal is always to prevent abuses from recurring. You should ask me: was your reproach of any use? And I would answer: yes, I think it was of some use for a while. For a while . . . Now that they know they've gone too far in many areas and in many ways, the CIA and the NSA are going to be a little more careful for a while. What I am afraid of, in fact, is the consequence of the Welch assassination and of the leaks. There will be no congressional oversight in the near future, I'm afraid. The real oversight will have to come from the executive branch. And I don't think that the executive branch will ever completely monitor itself. So, after a while, I fear, the oversight will become *pro forma* again. And the abuses, I fear, will start again.

To our Readers

With this issue, Henry Fairlie joins *The New Republic* as contributing editor. Formerly editorial writer of *The Times* (London), he has written on American political affairs since 1966. Fairlie is also the author of *The Life of Politics* (1968), *The Kennedy Promise* (1973), and *The Spoiled Child of the Western World* (Doubleday, 1976). The Oxford English Dictionary identifies him as the *locus classicus* for the first use of the term "the Establishment."

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Freeing Money to Do Things for People

Regulating Banks

by Robert Samuelson

The most remarkable thing about the latest fuss over the banking system is what was missed. The press riveted its attention on increases in bank loan losses and the lavish style in which US Comptroller James Smith goes about regulating national banks. These stories were good copy, but they left false impressions that the banking system is in danger of imminent collapse (which it isn't) and that there are dramatic opportunities to improve bank regulation (which there aren't).

Meanwhile, probably the most significant financial legislation since the depression has been bouncing around Congress almost unnoticed. Ultimately, the legislation could affect the flow of credit into housing, the interest rates paid on consumer savings deposits, the payment of interest on checking accounts, and competition between banks and savings associations for consumer business. Passage is not assured. The legislation threatens long established enclaves of economic privilege. Banks now have a monopoly on checking accounts. Savings associations — by government fiat—can pay slightly higher interest rates on savings accounts than banks. Each wants what the other has without surrendering its own exclusive power. *Voici*, the ingredients of a lobbying Donnybrook, with banks and savings associations clawing at each other unmercifully. When it's over the legislation may have been watered down to the point of inconsequence or scuttled.

To understand the struggle, one needs some background: the nation's system of banking institutions is an inelegant patchwork, the product of historic accident and geographic custom. First we have the 14,600 commercial banks, with more than $900 billion in assets. By law, they can offer checking accounts and savings accounts and, in addition, can raise money in more esoteric ways (for example, by selling so-called certificates of deposit—$100,000 or more—to wealthy individuals and businessmen, or by borrowing overseas). Next we have the 5000 savings and loan associations with more than $330 billion in assets. Unlike banks, they can't offer checking accounts, and, unlike the banks—which can make almost any kind of loan or investment (purchasing corporate stock is a conspicuous exception)—the savings associations have traditionally been heavily committed to residential mortgages. At the end of 1975, 82 percent of their assets were in mortgages. Finally we have mutual savings banks ($120 billion in assets) heavily concentrated in New England and the Northeast, and credit unions ($35 billion).

If this system once made sense, it doesn't now. Correcting the mess is what the banking legislation is all about, and, as a practical matter, the biggest part of the mess is the vast difference between banks and savings associations. At first, the job seems simple. Give the savings associations the powers they lack. That is what Congress set out to do last year. The Senate passed legislation that would allow savings associations to provide most normal consumer financial services—checking accounts, personal loans, trust acounts and credit cards. The change would go a long ways toward enhancing the savings associations' ability to attract deposits. No longer would savings associations bear the burden of not offering the convenience of having a savings account and a checking account at the same place.

Technology also seems to impel the melting of artificial differences between banks and savings associations. Increasingly, money is being transferred electronically. The government—and a few large corporations—offer employees the convenience of having paychecks credited directly to their accounts. The Treasury is now in the process of giving more than 40 million beneficiaries of government retirement and veterans programs, including Social Security, the same choice. Likewise, some firms (particularly utilities and insurance companies) have plans whereby monthly bills are automatically deducted from a customer's bank or savings account. A number of large retail stores have computer terminals at checkout counters; buyers can pay by having the computer transfer funds to the store's account.

Such changes blur the traditional distinction between checking and savings accounts. If you can pay for your groceries with an automatic deduction from your savings account, you may keep less money in your checking account. That helps savings associations. On the other hand, the need for paper checks isn't about to disappear. People tend to put most of their salary into checking accounts, and, as electronic depositing of wage and beneficiary payments increases, banks could win most of the business. The Treasury's initial experience with Social Security payments

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confirms this; nearly 90 percent of the participants elected to have their checks deposited at a bank. In short, technology threatens to make an already-confusing financial system still more confused. Competition for funds—already distorted by historic and legal anomalies—threatens to become more distorted.

If you think Congress can easily make everything right, however, you are likely wrong. Aside from sheer inconvenience, the system has more fundamental problems. During periods of rapidly-rising interest rates, the savings associations tend to lose large volumes of deposits, because they can't increase the rates on their accounts as quickly as rates elsewhere rise. Consequently, large savers withdraw their money and put it in more lucrative investments, such as government securities. Hit by huge withdrawals, savings associations—the single largest source of mortgage credit—can't make new loans. Without credit, the housing industry goes into a tailspin. In the last decade, the cycle of interest rate rise and housing collapse has occurred three times (1966,1969 and 1974).

And when it does happen, there is another victim: the small saver. Although large depositors can shift their money, small savers often can't. Either they need the ready cash provided by a savings account or they simply haven't got enough money to pay for the minimum denomination of government or corporate securities (sometimes $1000, but often $5000 or $10,000).

Both problems stem from savings associations' overwhelming investment in long term mortgages at fixed interest rates. The reason that savings associations can't raise interest rates quickly on their accounts is that the return from their portfolios of mortgages doesn't increase rapidly. Right now, new mortgages are being made around nine percent. The average rate has consistently exceeded eight percent since 1973, and, in some places passed 10 percent at the peak. Yet, the average return on mortgages held by associations is now only 7.6 percent, reflecting the impact of thousands of mortgages made years ago when rates were lower. Obviously, savings associations can't afford to pay savers an average of more than 7.6 percent. In fact, they must pay less (the average is 6.3 percent) to cover overhead expenses and profits.

Contrast that with commercial banks. They have diversified loan and investment portfolios; mortgages, for example, account for only about 15 percent of their assets. The average loan and investment has a much shorter maturity than a 25 or 30-year mortgage; as interest rates rise, loans are made at higher rates. Moreover most business loans are tied to the "prime rate" and increase automatically. Thus, far more than savings associations, banks can adjust.

The inequality between banks and savings associations has spawned another quirk of the present system: interest rate ceilings. To protect the savings associations from massive deposit losses to banks, the government limits the permissible interest rates on savings accounts at banks and associations. Indeed, the savings associations receive a small advantage. On a normal passbook savings account, the savings association can now pay 5.25 percent; the banks, 5 percent. On a savings certificate with more than a year's deposit requirements, the associations can pay 6.5 percent; the banks, 6 percent.

There is no avoiding the logic of this situation. Ultimately, if savings associations are to insulate themselves against massive outflows of funds, they must be weaned from their exclusive dependence on mortgages at fixed interest rates. Only two practical ways exist to do this: either the savings associations have to shift an increasingly large portion of the portfolios to short-term loans or investments; or, new mortgages have to be written with variable interest rates (that is, rates that can rise or fall with general fluctuations). Or both. But, without these kinds of shifts, the cosmetic changes made in granting new checking and lending powers will be relatively meaningless. A spurt of high interest rates will still cause outflows; housing will still be hurt, and the small saver will still be trapped.

And that is the prospect. Congress is recoiling from the basic logic, mostly because the logic isn't superficially popular. Variable interest rate mortgages have acquired the reputation of a consumer rip-off. When Sen. Thomas McIntyre, chairman of the subcommittee on financial institutions, held hearings last year, labor unions and consumer groups objected vociferously. That apparently killed any chance of including variable rate authority in the present legislation. The Federal Home Loan Bank Board (which regulates federally chartered associations) had proposed regulations to permit variable rate mortgages, but withdrew them after loud screams from Congress.

But, as McIntyre himself remarked, "the variable rate mortgage may not be quite the danger that consumer groups and labor unions see it to be." The spectre of mortgage payments jumping $50 to $100, month in and month out is, indeed, a horror. In practice, the variable rate loans would not work such hardship. Adjustments can be restricted to once every six months or a year, with maximum increases in any one step. The Bank Board suggested one-half-of-one percent, which, on a $35,000 25-year mortgage, would be about $12 a month. The maximum allowable increase over the life of the mortgage would have been 2.5 percent. A 45-day prenotification requirement would have been mandatory. Rate increases would have been tied to an independent index of outside interest rates, and decreases indicated by the index would also have been required. Finally, the homeowner would have had the choice of postponing the maturity of his loan rather than increasing his monthly payment.

"Consumer protection" is a beguiling phrase often

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hurled in opposition to the variable mortgages. But consumers who are new homeowners are solidly middle class. The assertion that they cannot understand the mortgage's uncertainties and obligations insults their intelligence. During a highly inflationary period, virtually everything goes up—food prices, utility rates, wages, taxes and interest rates. Exempting mortgages is not "consumer protection" so much as economic privilege. In effect, it means that the small saver often subsidizes his economic better, the homeowner.

If Congress is unwilling to tiptoe toward variable mortgages, it is almost as reluctant to prod savings associations to diversify their loan activities. The Senate bill requires that associations keep 70 percent of their assets in mortgages. The legislation now before the House Banking Committee effectively sets the requirement at 80 percent (this restriction, however, is not quite as rigid as it seems; included in the total are a number of other types of investments, such as government securities). Making more personal and consumer loans would aid the associations, because the loans have higher rates and shorter maturities. But, in effect, Congress is saying: we give you new powers to make consumer loans, but we don't want you to use them too much.

Behind this ambivalent message is more politics and misguided economics. Consumer groups and labor representatives worried that savings associations, even though they may be able to attract more deposits, would desert housing mortgages; these groups had to be mollified. Actually, some savings executives are so lethargic that they don't do anything rapidly except breathe; the restrictions encourage the industry's most standpatish tendencies. Many (though not all) associations simply want the added drawing power of checking privileges without being forced to compete directly with banks in providing consumer credit. Life would be so much easier if they had both checking powers *and* the continued protection of the interest rate differential on savings accounts. And that is what Congress has, so far, given them. The House bill mandates the continuation of the savings associations one-quarter point advantage for at least five-and-a-half years; the Senate bill fudges the issue, but basically orders the federal banking agencies to do the same thing. (The thrift associations' lust for checking powers has been somewhat obscured by the confusion between checking accounts and so-called NOW accounts—Negotiated Orders of Withdrawal—which have been legalized in New England. Some thrifts say they want NOW, but not checking accounts. Though legal distinctions exist between the two, the practicial difference is virtually meaningless. The House bill would even obliterate the legal distinction.)

A political compromise of this sort—done in the name of housing—will probably not help housing and may have damaged the legislation's ultimate chances of passage. A case can be made out that the requirements for mortgage lending (the 80 and 70 percent in the House and Senate bills) could actually hurt the economics of savings associations. During periods when they have large amounts of funds, they will be induced to push extra money out in mortgages. That will tend to lower mortgage rates; if interest rates later rise, associations will then be more vulnerable to outflows. More important, the artificial stimulation of mortgage lending raises questions of soundness: will savings associations be induced to make unnecessarily risky loans, or subtly encouraged to finance speculative "overbuilding"? Both problems are ever-present in real estate lending. These mortgage-lending provisions represent another attempt by Congress to force-feed the housing market. Such efforts have not worked well in the past; the section 235 program spawned scandal, and more technical approaches—creating federal agencies to borrow and re-lend for housing—have probably only exacerbated interest rate fluctuations by stimulating credit demand.

Politically, however, the effective freezing of the interest rate differential has made bankers livid, and, in the process, given them a semi-legitimate debating point to use to kill the bill altogether. In practical terms, the importance of the quarter point differential has probably been exaggerated by both bankers and savings associations. The real protection for the savings associations is the existence of interest rate ceilings—which prevent banks from exploiting a natural advantage—not the puny differential. Virtually no one believes that the ceilings (as opposed to the differential) can be eliminated immediately without a devastating impact on thrift associations. The hope simply is to be able to raise the ceilings, which, of course, depends on what savings associations are allowed to do with their money.

But the differential allows bankers to cry, with some cause, that they've been treated unfairly. Opinions differ on the bankers' real motives, reflecting genuine disagreement among banks of different sizes. Many of the bigger, best-known banks (such as the large New York banks) are probably least concerned with the legislation, because their funds derive more heavily from corporate accounts and large certificates-of-deposit; these CDs, issued in amounts of $100,000 or more, are not covered by interest rate restrictions. The American Bankers Association says it's for genuinely equal competition, but strenuously protests the provision that would permit interest payments on checking accounts. And many officials suspect that the opposition of large numbers of bankers goes much deeper: they just don't want to lose their monopoly over checking accounts.

Legislation like this is settled less by public opinion than by the fervor, persuasiveness and clout of rival interest groups. The bankers have mounted a massive

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lobbying campaign to convince the House of the legislation's undesirability. The essence of the campaign is simply to have local bankers write, phone and visit their congressmen. This is what's known as "heat," a process all the more effective during an election year when campaign support—financial and otherwise—is so important. The financial legislation contains a great many other provisions, including changes in federal bank regulatory agencies and the structure of the Federal Reserve System, but the significance of these proposals has probably been exaggerated. The effectiveness of monetary policy and bank regulatory policies (that is, bank examination, approvals and mergers) probably reflects the political and intellectual climate more than organizational changes. The gut issue remains the relative powers of financial institutions, and the outcome now seems to hinge on the lobbying talents of the adversaries.

Almost any genuine reform takes years to show results. To think that even the best financial reform would instantly cure long-standing problems is naive. Over the next few decades, the spread of electronic money-shuffling may homogenize the financial system anyway, but the preservation of ancient legal fences would slow and confuse the process. Meanwhile, unless we are lucky enough to escape a new round of inflation, wide interest rate fluctuations are likely to recur with their disastrous effects on housing and small savers. There may be no instant cure, but medicine to relieve the pain is better than nothing at all.

Italy's Russian Sugar Daddies

by Michael Ledeen & Claire Sterling

The Italian Communist Party (PCI) has taken two basic positions regarding the scandals that continue to dominate the front pages of Italy's newspapers. The first is that the PCI has been untouched by the scandals, and that much of its growing strength is the result of the public's belief that, in the words of the party newspaper *L'Unita*, "only an honest political force has the authority to call upon the workers to make the necessary effort" to combat the current economic crisis. The second Communist claim is that corruption of the sort that has come to public attention as a result of the American congressional investigations into the Lockheed and CIA payoffs in Italy demonstrates that the United States has limited Italian sovereignty. As *L'Unita* put it recently, the scandals have raised "problems connected to the struggle for our national independence." The PCI has presented itself as both uncorrupted and genuinely independent of both the United States and the Soviet Union, claims that have been gaining ground both at home and abroad in recent months. However, there is a substantial body of information suggesting that Italian Communists are themselves involved in highly profitable business activities of dubious morality and legality, and that their own economic ties to the Soviet bloc have been such as to seriously prejudice any attempt on their part to achieve genuine independence.

Like all Italian political parties the PCI has had to find sources of income to supplement the limited amounts paid by party members for their membership cards and newspaper and magazine subscriptions. But whereas other parties have been able to capitalize on their positions of national power to perform domestic favors for contributions in Italy and the West, the Communists until quite recently have been forced to seek their supplementary income elsewhere. Both ideology and pragmatism directed them eastward, and in the years since the end of World War II they have reportedly developed a highly remunerative system of commissions on public and private trade between Italy and countries of the Soviet bloc and the Third World. Moreover, party discipline has been quite effective, ensuring that the profits from these business activities went to the party itself. Recently this income seems to have been augmented by Italian contributions, as PCI strength in regional and municipal governments has made such funding more accessible than it had been in the past. Communist efficiency in these areas contrasts

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sharply with the behavior of other Italian parties where, as one American congressman recently observed, much of the money intended for political purposes has evidently served only to enrich the personal fortunes of the faithful. Consequently the PCI today is in a superior financial position, compared to the other parties, and often gets favored treatment when it bids against its political opponents. For example, a highly-placed observer in Italy's ministry of the interior recently commented that theater owners would prefer to rent space to the Communists for election rallies, since they could be certain to be paid promptly. With the other parties they could expect to have to wait a year or even longer to get their fees. The same holds true, he added, in other areas.

The system that has enabled the PCI to reach its present economic position began shortly after the end of World War II, when Palmiro Togliatti, recently returned from his refuge in Moscow, recognized the necessity of developing a reliable method of financing his party. He was able to meet some urgent short-term needs through direct payments from the Soviet Union and some "insurance" money from industrialists, particularly those in Naples who had been active in fascism and feared reprisals from the well-organized and extremely popular PCI. But a more stable and respectable method of business was necessary, and under Togliatti's supervision the party created Simes, the first of many import-export companies engaged in trade with the Soviet bloc. Simes held a virtual monopoly of the Sicilian citrus trade with the Soviet Union, granted to the PCI company by Stalin himself. According to sources who were extremely close to the operation at that time, the arrangements were negotiated between former general and member of the Politburo, Andrei Zhdanov and Eugenio Reale, who for many years was Togliatti's closest associate in the PCI. Reale would later leave the party following the Soviet repression of the Hungarian uprising in 1956. When asked recently about his role in the creation of the import-export system, Reale wouldn't confirm or deny these reports. At the same time the Simes citrus trade was approved by the Russians, the PCI was given the additional benefit of low-cost newsprint, shipped directly to the party's printers from Yugoslavia.

Operations in the late '40s and early '50s were substantial, involving traffic in Hungarian meat and Polish coal, this latter sent to Fiat in Turin as a form of compensation for the more than 2000 trucks and automobiles confiscated at the Polski Fiat works by the new Communist regime. These operations established the PCI as a highly useful middleman in commerce between Italy and the Comecon countries, and the party often managed to take commissions at both ends of the transactions. The meat traffic established a precedent for present activities, and was particularly active in the '50s, despite the fact that, as one of the major PCI operatives said recently, "the Hungarians hated us to death. There we were making money off their meat, and they were living in misery." Nor was PCI business limited to trade in legally acceptable goods. For a period in the '50s party operatives conducted a thriving traffic in "strategic materials" that had been shipped from the United States to Western European countries. Through their company in Zurich, Falchimex, the Communists rerouted these materials through Poland and Czechoslovakia, and made as much as one billion lire a year (roughly $1.5 million) for PCI coffers. Given the importance of such transactions, it is not surprising to find that the PCI generally carried on its business at very high levels. Eastern European sources, for example, recently provided a copy of a treaty signed in the early '50s between the PCI and the Czechoslovakian government, stipulating in great detail what areas of commerce between the two countries would be the exclusive preserve of the Italian comrades and their companies.

Italian government officials and anti-Communist groups were well aware of the existence of such activities, and on more than one occasion attempted to restrict the PCI's commercial gains. One minister even made suspect societies swear that they would not give any money to the party, an undertaking that not surprisingly seems to have had little effect on party commissions. The revenues from such operations often ended in Swiss bank accounts, just as they reportedly do today. Yet the revenues from the import-export businesses, at least until very recently, were minimal in the context of the expanding needs of the party. It is symptomatic that when the right-wing press in the middle '50s attacked the PCI for its import-export activities, Togliatti remarked to a close associate that he was delighted by the attacks since they served to distract the authorities and the public from the main source of party funding: the direct flow of dollars from behind the Iron Curtain.

The PCI was the first party in Italy to publish its budget, but the budget published was not an accurate one. Sources in the ministry of the interior and others close to the PCI confirm that while the party claimed to have budgets in the general neighborhood of two billion lire ($3 million) during the '50s and early '60s, the actual budget carried a figure of twelve billion lire. Of this total, only about one-and-a-half billion came from the operation of party-controlled companies. The rest was made up by party memberships, subscriptions and sales of publications, the mandatory contribution of roughly one-half of the salary of each party leader and member of parliament, and direct contributions from the Russians. When asked recently about such contributions, both now and in the past, Gianni Cervetti, a member of the party secretariat and an expert on economic matters, said that there had been no direct aid of any sort from the Soviet Union since the end of the war (during the Fascist period the PCI had received

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financing through the Comintern). However numerous sources, and a celebrated incident, suggest otherwise. Well-informed observers report that the Russians sent millions of dollars to the PCI in American banknotes. These were divided up and distributed among party members, who then stored them in safes in their homes. Certain party functionaries were given sets of keys to these safes, in order to make "withdrawals" as they became necessary. After the arrival of $1 million in cash one day in the middle '50s, one of the functionaries, Giulio Seniga, secretly alienated from the party for some time, made the rounds of the safes and moved north with his newly acquired fortune. It is typical both of the party and of those who leave it that the party took no action against Seniga, and Seniga spent little if any of the money on his own behalf. Some of it went to extremist left-wing groups and then, as his political attitudes changed, the bulk was contributed to more moderate non-Communist organizations. In an interesting footnote to this celebrated episode, Eastern European sources familiar with PCI financing report that one of the safes opened by Seniga belonged to the noted publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, who later left the party when the Russians attempted to block the Italian publication of *Doctor Zhivago*. Not only did this deprive the PCI of an important publisher, but, again according to Eastern European sources, it cost the party a substantial commission on the book's royalties.

Well-informed sources in Rome claim that substantial cash payments continue to be made. The usual figure cited is from 30 to 35 percent of the party's expenditures (the official PCI budget shows less than 30 billion lire, informed sources estimate the real figure at three to four times that amount) in the form of direct and indirect aid, but since the Seniga affair, no conclusive evidence exists to document the charge. It is not illegal to import money into Italy, and Italian authorities would appear to have no grounds to attempt to intercept the couriers. Moreover, if the stories are correct, the bulk of the payments arriving in Italy come through diplomatic channels, and virtually everyone connected with handling the money would have either diplomatic or parliamentary immunity. The Italian government might be tempted to investigate the matter in order to collect taxes on unreported party income, but since it appears that virtually all political parties are involved in traffic of this sort, a kind of mutual blackmail exists. No one party seeks to break the general silence for fear that the others will reciprocate in kind. Hence it is not surprising that the most effective public information regarding the covert financing of Italian political parties has come from outside the country, as in the case of the recent American congressional investigations. Although estimates of the size of direct Soviet aid differ greatly, there is virtual unanimity on one issue, and that is that some of the party's commercial activities in recent years have been spectacularly successful.

The import-export companies have evolved considerably over the course of the last 20 years. Many societies that were originally created by the PCI and staffed almost exclusively by party members have now become private companies, while several key operators in the field have terminated their relationship with the party and established an independent base for themselves. A case in point is that of Piero Savoretti, the president of Novasider (Milan-Turin-Moscow). One of three brothers, Savoretti went to Russia in the early '50s, down on his luck and without money. Today, thanks to considerable hard work and excellent connections, he is an extremely wealthy man (authoritative Western sources estimated Savoretti's personal fortune at roughly $8 million in the early '60s). Married to a Russian, Savoretti is a close friend of Dzerman Gvishiany, who is named in *The Penkovsky Papers* as an important member of the KGB. Gvishiany, Kosygin's son-in-law, is the chairman of the state committee for science and technology, and is often in Italy for meetings of the distinguished Club of Rome, of which he is a founding member. He has apparently been helpful to both Savoretti and Russo-Italian trade. At one time Savoretti was widely identified as a key PCI representative in Moscow, but he is not in the party now, and a well-informed source in the international business community recently said that it was unthinkable that Savoretti continued to give commissions to the party. He is a major Italian agent in Moscow, where he handles Fiat's substantial affairs in the Soviet Union. He is said to have been one of the leading negotiators in landing the important Fiat contract for Togliattigrad.

There are many similar cases where commercial relations between Italian businesses and Eastern Europe were originally established through party middlemen, to the mutual advantage of the Italian companies and the PCI, and then "normalized." Fiat itself, which used PCI experts in dealing with the Soviet bloc in the immediate post-war period, now appears to use its own channels to negotiate trade agreements in the East. Examples of this sort demonstrate that the PCI is not involved, as many have suggested, in the creation of a kind of "Mafia" or a "protection racket" involving Italian trade with the East. Rather, the party, through its good offices, has been instrumental in facilitating contacts between Eastern European countries and Italian businessmen. The party, like all middlemen, has taken commissions from such transactions, but it is not mandatory for Italian businessmen to go through the PCI to trade with the Soviet bloc, nor are they committed to paying endless commissions when they do use the party for their contacts. Indeed, an investigation of PCI activities in the import-export field would seem to greatly enhance the image of the party as an efficient, modern organization, which is

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well-versed in the techniques of international capitalism and fully justifies the nickname that Alberto Ronchey, a leading Italian journalist, has given it: the world's biggest multinational corporation. Moreover, there is considerable evidence to suggest that in recent years the party has become so expert in this trade and other money-making activities that it may have lessened its dependence on direct aid from the Soviet Union. Its growing strength within Italy has enabled it to funnel money through other organizations, and diversify its domestic activities.

According to numerous authoritative sources, the biggest and most profitable PCI company doing business in the Soviet Union is Restital of Milan, which was completely controlled by the party as of the beginning of 1976. Under the able direction of Enzio Gemma, Restital and its subsidiary, Sorimpex, deal in a wide variety of manufactured products and commodities including gold, copper, diamonds and other precious stones. Restital is one of the few companies that has full accreditation in Russia, which enables it to obtain a permanent residence permit and permission to do business. It is consequently a highly attractive company for Italians who wish to trade with the Russians, and Italian businessmen are solicited by some high-ranking PCI leaders. Restital is, however, more than a simple business, for it appears to function in a second capacity as a conduit for money to the party itself. Recent information suggests that there may be a surprising story involved in payments to Restital, which links the company to one of the central figures involving the Lockheed bribes to high-ranking Italian officials.

In recent weeks Italian government investigators have made substantial progress in unravelling the complicated networks through which Lockheed payoffs reached Italians thought to be in a position to help sell Hercules C-130 aircraft to the government. The latest discoveries suggest that the central figure in the negotiations for the Hercules contract was Camillo Crociani, a man of great wealth and power in Rome. Until quite recently he was the president of Finmeccanica, one of the largest companies within the vast state holding trust, IRI, which itself controls more than half of important Italian industry. Finmeccanica owns Alfa Romeo and deals in such sensitive and costly items as nuclear power plants and the Italian merchant fleet.

Crociani appears to have entered the negotiations at a late stage, and for the remarkably small "fee" of 140 million lire ($200,000) paid into a shadowy company called Om. El., conducted the bargaining to a successful conclusion. Several Italian newspapers have suggested that Crociani viewed this as a favor for Lockheed, for which he expected lucrative contracts in the future. The press has rightly pointed out that Crociani, who has since resigned his position at Finmeccanica and fled the country with the aid of a diplomatic passport, was for all intents and purposes a member of the government. The influential *Corriere Della Sera* of Milan has likened his role to that of Stavisky in the Third French Republic, and observes that a scandal that involves a Crociani inevitably implicates the political class that raised him to power and dealt with him intimately over the years. If this is true, then the PCI must be adjudged part of that political class, for information recently received from authoritative Western sources indicates that Crociani was involved in business transactions with the Communists. It appears that Crociani recently made a large payment to Restital, upon receiving instructions to that effect from the Soviet ambassador. The same sources observed that the PCI has recently attempted to put some distance between it and Restital, and has tried to sell it, along with two other companies (Sitco and Esteuropa) to the Cooperative League, itself the object of considerable speculation in recent months in connection with three other financial scandals.

The National Cooperative League, under the direction of Vincenzo Galetti, a veteran Communist from Bologna, has become one of the most potent and successful economic institutions of postwar Italy. Reconstituted in 1945 after having been suppressed for nearly 30 years by fascism, the League wields enormous weight within the Italian economy. The simple statistics suffice to tell the story: nearly three million members, an annual business (excluding agriculture) of three trillion lire ($400 billion), 11,000 businesses ranging from fishermen's groups to part ownerships in publishing houses (Feltrinelli), film productions, apartment houses and real estate. The agricultural sector is similarly impressive: an annual business of 140 billion lire ($15 billion). On the other side of the ledger is the enormous purchasing power of the "Coops": the national consortium buys some 20 billion lire ($2.5 billion) of goods a year for its members, while the National Association of Consumer Cooperatives does a whopping 383 billion lire ($45 billion) of purchases annually.

The Coops' base is in the traditionally "red belt" of North Central Italy—the Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany, where Communists have long figured in regional and local governments and have been the dominant forces in the cooperative movement. While there are non-Communist cooperatives in Italy, they do not have the national power of the "Red League" (although the General Cooperative Association, organized by the Republicans and Social Democrats, with some Socialist participation, last year did a gross business of 800 billion lire).

The first of the three cooperative-related scandals involves the giant department store chain Standa, whose president, Gino Sferza, has been accused of making large payoffs to promote the expansion and renewed success of his stores and supermarkets (they have been losing large amounts of money lately). In an interview in the weekly newsmagazine *Tempo* last week,

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Sferza defended these practices, maintaining that his behavior was absolutely normal, and that if he had not made the payments he would have jeopardized the jobs of thousands of employees. "The payments are not made to open Standas," he said, "but to keep them from closing." If a chain like his own wanted to be successful, Sferza suggested, it simply had to make obligatory payoffs throughout the country. Moreover, he argued that the payoffs were not made to obtain special treatment, but were required for the most "elementary rights," such as obtaining building permits. Sometimes cash payments were involved, while on other occasions he had been required to hire entire families. Other companies were similarly compelled to perform "favors," but, Sferza said, organizations such as the Coops were able to obtain special treatment "thanks to their precious political patrimony."

Sferza maintained the Coops not only provided favors, but were also on the receiving end in areas where their political influence was particularly strong. "We had to open a department store in a city which we shall call 'X'. Certain parties said to us: 'Fine, we will give you a permit, but on the condition that you reach an agreement with the Coops.' This meant that we had to give the Coops a four-story building so that they could open their own store in the same town."

The Coops also figure in the growing scandal over changes in zoning regulations and the resultant profits made by the Siem Real Estate Company in Parma. Parma is currently governed by a mixed Socialist and Communist council, and to date several members of the ruling group have been implicated and arrested. Of these, one prominent Communist, Renato Corsini, is in prison, apparently because the investigating judge has found a connection between the sale of certain centrally located parcels of land and the cooperative consortium, "that well-known Communist fiefdom" as a writer for *Il Giornale* of Milan put it recently. Corsini, who was an employee of Siem, a former cashier of the PCI in Parma, and a party representative on the administrative council of the Cassa Di Risparmio (home savings and loan) in Parma, evidently served as the conduit for a payoff to the party. *Il Giornale* claims that the cooperative consortium purchased large blocks of land when they were zoned for use as parks and areas for social services, and then built condominiums once de-zoning had been voted by the Socialist-Communist council. In the midst of these transactions the former president of the province, the Communist Ivanoe Sensini (currently a member of the regional council) bought two apartments, one of which does not seem to exist. The judge investigating the matter is said to have discovered a check in the amount of the price of one of the apartments, made out to Corsini. "The suspicion," according to *Il Giornale*, "is that this is the 'packet' for the party."

The PCI has attempted to absolve itself of any responsibility in this matter, arguing that if Corsini (whom they have termed "A ne'er-do-well with a party membership card") acted illegally, he did so not as a member of the party, but as a private individual. This may very well be true, and the investigation is still in progress. But it is suggestive that here, as in the case of Gino Sferza's accusation, the Coops appear to have served as a sort of agent for the PCI.

The third scandal in which the Coops figure as purported middlemen for the PCI is one that was recently raised in the Chamber of Deputies by a group of neo-Fascist representatives, and regards the importation of meat and fish. According to a recent article in the *Corriere Della Sera*, Italy was forced to import nearly 700 billion lire of meat and fish in 1974, a figure that appears to be growing with each passing year, despite rapidly rising prices. On the first of March, five members of the Movimento Sociale Italiano-Destra Nazionale (the neo-Fascist party) directed a formal inquiry to the ministers of foreign commerce and forests and agriculture, asking them to confirm or deny claims that more than half of the meat imported into the country came from Eastern Europe and Asia, that imports from these countries were the exclusive domain of a handful of import-export agencies, and that these agencies were in turn "connected with the so-called 'Coops' and in any event with men of the PCI through whose work the PCI gains high profits from the above-mentioned activity, by means of payoffs which vary from five to 11 percent." The MSI-DN deputies went on to ask if it were not the case that, "according to conservative and inductive calculations," the party made "not less than 40 billion lire (more than $50 million)" on such traffic. To date there has been no reply from the ministers in question.

The figures involved in these charges seem to be quite high, and one is inevitably skeptical of the sources of the parliamentary inquiry, but recent discussions with people actively involved in meat imports suggest that there is some possibility the statistics may be quite close to the truth. One leading meat importer is said to have told a close friend that business had never been so good, even though he had had to pay seven percent in commissions to a party intermediary. The same figure was cited by a usually reliable source in a left-of-center political party. Given the present economic crisis in the country, it is considered unlikely that there will be any reply to the parliamentary inquiry in the near future.

Italy's Communists have repeatedly claimed to have "clean hands," and to have remained above the often scandalous behavior of the country's ruling class. In their last published budget, the Communists printed a brief footnote in which they stated that "there have been no contributions from companies, other organizations or trade union or other associations." Gianni Cervetti stated that the party had nothing to do with any import-export companies, had no companies of its own, and had no income from any such source. He

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observed that the Cooperative League had a wide range of activities, but said that these activities were encouraged "not as a party, but as a cooperative league." The Coops' activities abroad, for example, were to be taken as a hopeful sign of cooperation between the League and certain foreign countries. He was particularly enthusiastic about some recent construction the League had undertaken in Somalia.

Close observers of the PCI have noted that it, alone of all Italian parties, has never undergone a serious economic crisis, even in the years when opportunities for contributions to the party were quite low. Their conclusion is that during the lean years of the '50s and '60s, the PCI continued to flourish economically thanks to the direct flow of dollars from Moscow to Rome. Recently the situation seems to be changing, and the party appears to have established a solid commercial base, which is to some extent independent of direct Soviet aid. Many observers see a connection between the evolution of Italian Communist doctrine and the developing financial security of the party, arguing that the PCI can begin to act with a certain ideological independence precisely because it is no longer totally dependent economically on the Kremlin. Others are not so sure, and claim on the contrary that the growth of the Communists' economic strength has taken place only to the extent that Italy has become increasingly involved in commercial relations with the Soviet bloc, and that this only confirms the intimate and unbreakable lines that bind the PCI to the Russians. Supporters of this view cite the substantial shift in the pattern of Italian exports toward the Soviet bloc and OPEC and other developing countries in the past few years. In fact, whereas in 1973 Italian exports to "countries with planned economies" constituted only 4.9 percent of total exports, by the first half of 1975 they amounted to more than seven percent. Moreover, government-insured exports to the Soviet Union went from nine percent of the total in 1969 (when a portion of the 200 billion lire loaned to the Soviet Union for the construction of Togliattigrad was still included in the data) to a whopping 19 percent in 1975.

It comes as no surprise to discover that the PCI actively encourages this trade, and it would be unfair to suggest that it does so for motives of economic self-interest as a party. Italy needs to seek new markets, and is, for the moment at least, hard pressed to compete in many areas of the Common Market and North America and Japan. The PCI has taken the lead in stimulating Italian commerce with Third World and Comecon countries, and party secretary Enrico Berlinguer often sounded like a minister of foreign commerce without portfolio during a visit to Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, and Algeria last December, as for example when he issued a joint communiqué with the Algerian National Liberation Front stressing "the necessity of developing solidarity and coordination between the progressive forces of the countries of the Third World and the working class and the progressive forces of the capitalist countries of Europe." In other words, the party is promoting a pattern of foreign trade that would shift Italy's commercial ties away from the West and toward the Soviet bloc and the developing countries.

In this context, it seems appropriate to ask the PCI whether it is capable of being the representative of a European communism, or whether its numerous and enduring financial ties to the Soviet Union do not make it impossible for the party to achieve true independence from the Kremlin. For the most part the debate on this question has been cast in excessively abstract terms, and the various Kremlinologists and newly emerged experts on the PCI have delighted in analyzing Berlinguer's Moscow speech and the Russian translation thereof. There is undoubtedly a serious conflict in progress between Rome (and Paris) and Moscow, but the question remains, what real effect, if any, will this have on the policies of the PCI? Can the PCI provide the leadership necessary for Italy in the second half of the '70s within the Common Market? The party itself believes that it can, and has consistently insisted that it will act within the framework of the Common Market to achieve a European policy independent of both the United States and the Soviet Union. Yet to date it would appear that the Russian piper continues to play the Italian Communist arias. As *The Economist* noted in a recent study of the PCI, "without Soviet acquiescence in their revisionism, the reformist Communists fear they could suffer a Soviet takeover of the party." The man mentioned by *The Economist* as the potential leader of a pro-Soviet coup from within the party is Armando Cossutta, who is also the figure most often named as the busiest promoter of such companies as Restital, and who was instrumental in the creation and operation of Italturist, the travel bureau headed by PCI members, which arranges a very large part of the travel of Italians to Eastern Europe and the Third World.

Ironically, the PCI would seem to be showing its "Western" face when it is occasionally covered with mud, as in the recent scandals in which it appears to be involved. It should be taken as an encouraging sign in Washington that the Italian Communists seem to be making some money on internal Italian business operations of a quite traditional sort. Furthermore those who, like Treasury Secretary Simon, call for a regime of sacrifice and efficiency for the Italians can take comfort in the exemplary balance sheet of the PCI over the years. Few Western corporations can match the party in terms of consistent growth, diversification, internal stability, prompt payment of dividends and periodic change in management. It is true that the largest block of outstanding shares is still controlled by the old financiers, but there seem to be signs of change and there are many who expect a major stockholders fight in the near future.

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Arts and Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Friends and Others

Vincent, François, Paul and the Others (Joseph Green). I have a soft spot for the Pleasant Picture. It's *merely* pleasant. It doesn't do much more than let you pass a couple of hours in the company of some amiable people. Of course it needs some sort of story to keep one frame following another, but its real material is companionship, and its effect is envy—you wish you were one of the group. Two widely disparate examples: the Czech film *Intimate Lighting*, the US film *Pocket Money*. Now there's another, a French film with the long title above.

Claude Sautet is one of those late '60s French directors—Claude Lelouch *(A Man and a Woman)* is another—who came on like candied leftovers of the New Wave. Sautet's most tolerable film up to now was *César and Rosalie* (1973) with Yves Montand. Now, again with Montand, with the same script collaborators Jean-Loup Dabadie and Claude Neron, with the same soft-eyed cinematographer Jean Boffety, Sautet has made a film that concentrates on the characters instead of his embrace of them. Almost guiltily he includes some of his old glitzy touches—people seen through a café window with traffic running over their faces—but the picture's movement is mostly vigorous, the editing supple, the complications of a multi-stranded story are nicely juggled, and—most important—a consistent companionable mood is made. The film would have benefited by about 10 minutes' condensation in the last third, but outside of that slight sag, it's—well, it's pleasant.

The specific subject, resting on the underlying idea of companionship, is time, the passage of time. The proof of the passage is familiar: the difference between what a young man planned and what the middle-aged one is now doing. Montand is one of a group of friends who have stuck together for years. He is the owner of a small engineering plant; he began well but is now fizzling. Michel Piccoli is a doctor who started with social commitment and is now swathed in Parisian chic. Serge Reggiani is a writer who aimed high and is now luxuriously hack. The son of a deceased pal, Gerard Depardieu, who is one of the group, also goes through a (much-younger) change: he gives up a potentially successful career as a boxer to become a skilled artisan.

All the men have wives and/or mistresses; notable among them are Marie Dubois, the cigarette-puffer of *Jules and Jim*, and Stephane Audran, of many Chabrol films. The sequences with women are the tritest in the picture. Dubois is Piccoli's flagrantly unfaithful wife. When he loses his temper, after long complaisance, and beats her up, we know the sequence is going to end with his falling on top of her on the bed. Audran is Montand's divorced wife. When he is in dire money straits, he goes to see her in the middle of the night just to talk, and she listens with the post-marital sympathy we expect of ex-wives in French films. Audran does it well, but as I was enjoying it, I knew it was Gallic Scene 223A.

It doesn't matter. None of the plot really matters. The story is just an armature on which to braid the affection, including the quarrels, of some old pals, all of whom know that they are not what they set out to be, and since they are the only ones who know the *whole* story about each other, it's important that they hold on to one another. In the acid bath of time, their affection for one another is the most authentic thing about them.

Sautet catches this especially well in the very last shot. The four men have had lunch with their various ladies and are now going back to their occupations. They pause on a street corner, waiting for a light, not talking, just waiting together. Sautet shoots them with a telephoto lens, with some passers-by between them and the camera—just four men waiting on a street-corner. We know that it's freeze-frame time, and soon the freeze-frame comes to conclude things; but, for once, it's the right gesture.

All of the cast are likable, which is as important here as being good, with Montand carrying most of the action. He sometimes leans a little on the Good Joe syndrome, but his face as he ages is getting a nice friendly-frog look.

W.C. Fields and Me (Universal). Do two films make a trend? Biographical films about stars are not new—Valentino and Buster Keaton were only two of the sufferers in the past—but the last month has brought us a pair of such films, from the same studio. First, the undiscussable *Gable and Lombard* and now this just-barely-discussable picture about Fields. It's based on a book by Carlotta Monti, whom Fields once described as "a paramour on and off." The script was written by Bob Merrill, and I will only mumble meekly that there are some differences between it and the facts given in other Fields books.

But factual fidelity wouldn't make the film much better. The booby-trap in pictures like this is in the very glib analogy with books like this. When we read a biography of a famous performer, the story always has at least some interest because we are positing it against the pleasure the performer gave us, and we see the story as leading to or resulting from the professional activity that benefited us. While we read a Fields biography, we are hearing and seeing the "real" Fields, and that memory underpins even a bad book about him to some extent. But here, in this film, the story—which is not terribly engaging in itself—is posited against Rod Steiger imitating Fields, and the result is dismal. Without the actual verifiable talent of the protagonist, a film about a performer is doomed. (Remember that fine actress Vanessa Redgrave dancing in *Isadora?*)

Steiger has studied his subject carefully and does some fair mimicking of one of the easiest comics to mimic. He wears

Films Worth Seeing

All Screwed Up. Modern Milan. Lina Wertmüller's exuberance freshens (a bit too forcefully) the old theme of young people arriving in the big city.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. Jack Nicholson is tremendous in this dubious allegory set in a mental hospital.

Robin and Marian. Robin Hood 20 years later. Flapdoodle, but minimally seeable for some good actors and Richard Lester's direction.

Seven Beauties. Wertmüller again—a tragic farce about a Neapolitan in WW II. Trite touches, blatant touches, but a strong central idea strongly articulated.

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a bulbous nose, he even wears his mouth at the right slant. But he is not only not Fields, he is not remotely funny in the Fields comic bits he performs in the picture. People on screen keep breaking up at him, and out front we keep wondering why. Quite apart from the question of Fields' unique gifts, the producers picked in Steiger an actor without one dram of drollery.

Besides, Steiger has luminous brown eyes. Did Fields have any eyes at all? Yes, you can see them in some stills, but the *impression* of his face is of eye-slits only. Steiger overlooked this in his mimicry, so even the physical resemblance is far, far wide.

Valerie Perrine, who was sexy and effective as Lenny's wife in *Lenny*, plays Carlotta and is made a fool of.

The River Niger (Cine Artists). This prize-winning play by Joseph A. Walker was, as I noted when it was produced (*TNR*, Sept. 29, '73), terrible but not *just* terrible. Running through the oafish construction and rancid rhetoric were some elements of genuine affection between the people in the play. The picture version does all it can to suppress the play's virtues. You would really have to delve to find a professional film more stupidly directed and gapingly edited.

The story centers on a lower-middle-class black family in Los Angeles. The title is the title of a poem by the literary house-painter who is the head of the family. He drinks to compensate for his frustrations. His wife discovers that her cancer is progressing. His son, back from military service, discloses that he was not really an officer as bruited. He has a South African fiancée. He has former friends who are murderous militants.

The affectionate warmth that the play had sporadically is hurt because of the casting. Glynn Turman as the son is awful. (Where was Les Roberts or Albert Hall?) Cicely Tyson, usually so compelling, is remote as his mother. Only James Earl Jones as the painter-poet is good. Jones continues to grow, wonderfully. If you can endure the mess that goes before it, which is unlikely, you will be rewarded by Jones' reading of his Niger poem at the end. He makes the poem a statement of the fact that the man can't write poetry and that the poem is all the more moving because of that.

Reed Whittemore on television

Those Cultural Adamses

In most of the early newspaper reviews of "The Adams Chronicles" the big pitch was bigness. Six million dollars, nine scriptwriters, 3000 costumes—these were figures to conjure with, and the reviewers conjured, and the ones I read came up with the unusual theory that bigness had not destroyed the series. No, intelligence and restraint had saved the day.

I've now watched all but two of the first nine shows (the total is 13, running into mid-April) and beg to differ. Bigness is still a disaster in America, and in "The Adams Chronicles" the disaster is bigger than ever. As a nation we refuse to be instructed in bigness but keep making the same mistakes in its presence, decade after decade. So be it. Let the instruction begin . . .

In the first place, with three large benevolences (The National Endowment for the Humanities, The Andrew Mellon Foundation and The Atlantic-Richfield Company) entering the event determined to clear their Bicentennial consciences, and with several cultural sideshows (books, student and teacher guides and background films) grouping themselves conspicuously around the main tent, everybody *in* the main tent was sure to be uptight. They have been. And in the second place, with education and national uplift expected to rage through each and every minute of every show the uptightness was sure to be of a certain deadly kind. It has been. Each Tuesday I've found myself back in a high school history class staring greenly at such forgettable items as the conditions of the Treaty of Ghent, and each Tuesday I've heard the educational machinery grinding sadly behind lines like, "We shall need a President who can be above party politics" (to John Adams before he was nominated for the

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presidency) and "I have of course read your Federalist papers" (Mr. Adams to Alexander Hamilton) and "So now the fools have guillotined their king . . . I have no faith in the mob" (Hamilton himself, speaking his deep mind). But if culture and light may be imagined to be the motive power behind such junk, what of lesser lines, lines of no high school significance, lines like these between Mr. and Mrs. Adams in their own parlor after a sojourn abroad?

—Look at the condition of the furniture.
—I don't care. It's worth anything to be in our own home at last.

One reviewer I read reported that the show's producer, Virginia Kassel, had said that the family talk in the shows was sugar to coat history's pill. If in fact she said this—and I will return to the possibility—she should not have been the show's producer at all; but if she did not say this the lines still need to be explained, and my explanation is just that such lines are what you get from nine writers.

But why did the production *need* nine writers? Logistically there must of course have been great pressure to produce many great lines fast, and that pressure must have been converted, economically, to pressure to bring extra writing bodies into service (in fact a writers' strike held up production for some weeks), but such troubles could not have been the primal cause for nine writers. The primal cause must have been present before the production line was set up. The production needed nine writers because it was from the beginning—in the conceivings of those who conceived it—too big and important to be turned to any *one* writer. Or to any *one* mind. It could therefore only be consummated by mindlessness, that is, by committee.

Diversion. Long ago Raymond Chandler, who was merely one writer, went to Hollywood and hated it, but wrote scripts for a few movies before seceding. While he was there, and angry, he also wrote a few essays explaining why Hollywood was no place for writers, one of which is now being published for the first time (in the Spring, 1976, *Antaeus*). In this last essay he said, in passing, almost everything that needs to be said about "The Adams Chronicles."

He began by indicating that he was not greatly enamored of his writing prowess, was not persuaded that he could single-handedly master the strange medium of the film. To the contrary he was sure that if he *were* allowed to do a movie the way he would like to do one he would make mistakes, especially technical mistakes. He would certainly not be able to produce "a clean and wholesome shooting script" alone at his desk that would satisfy "all concerned." But who, he then asked, could? The real trouble with the writing of a screenplay was that "ninety-nine people know more about how it should be done than the one who does it."

(In "The Adams Chronicles" there were presumably 99 plus eight, the eight being eight additional writers.)

Chandler admitted that he was a partisan of the writer's role in films, but he was so because he was convinced that there could in the end be no other creative center to a film, and convinced also that without a center a film was lost. Briefly, "You can't make good pictures without good screenplays."

And what did this detective-story hack say were the *ingredients* of good screenplays? They were the ingredients of writing itself, an activity that "has to do with magic and emotion and vision, with the free flow of images, thoughts and ideas, with discipline that comes from within and is not imposed from without." He went on,

Without this or the hope of it writing is a lost endeavor. Without the magic there is no art. Without art there is no idealism. Without idealism there is no integrity. Without integrity there is nothing but production . . .

Not bad for a hack. I read his essay after seeing two of the Adams shows in a row in a studio, and immediately I wanted (a) to find more Chandler to read or reread, and (b) write this review. For Chandler had said it: the trouble with "The Adams Chronicles" was that finally it was "nothing but production."

Further diversion. There is plenty of peripheral integrity to "The Adams Chronicles." There is acting of integrity (and skill). There is historical integrity about facts small and large—and so much attentiveness to historical integrity of this kind that I lusted after falsehood—and there is as well a sort of Bicentennial integrity that has made imperative the inclusion of the weaknesses as well as the strengths of the Adamses (will the integrity, I wonder, go as far in the last two shows as to present Brooks and Henry Adams' Darwinian anti-capitalist anti-

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semitism?). Also there is some (slight) justification for the show's central vacancy—that is, the absence of the "magic" that Chandler was talking about—justification to be found in the show's title. It *is* a chronicle, and are not chronicles always vacant at the center like a doughnut? Holinshed's old English chronicles were like that, and even Shakespeare in converting pieces of them into plays did not always escape his source's trouble. Should a chronicle be wonderfully structured, or should it tell history's plain chaotic factual tale?

The producer of "The Adams Chronicle" obviously favored the latter, and was content therefore with the imposition of small incidental structures as the times blundered on. These structures presumably were the writers' doing, and some of them are effective. Episode number nine is, for instance, a well-shaped hour in which John Quincy's four-year stint in the White House is molded into about nine scenes (two of which are double scenes with the camera swinging from public event to back-room unhappiness) that span the four years painlessly, subordinating chronology to the conflict within J.Q. between his noble national aspirations and his political impotence. Bravo. But the hole at the doughnut's center remains. And it is a hole created not only by committee mindlessness but by the philosophy of history and social change (Kassel's?) that puts facts like the Treaty of Ghent front and center, reducing the nominal creators of the history to providing transitions between such treaties ("John, I know you're handling our country's interests well but how long must this go on?")

Now perhaps that is *not* the philosophy behind the series. Perhaps the emphasis upon history as a filing cabinet full of inaugural speeches, state funerals, white papers and white wigs is inadvertent. Certainly plenty of attention is paid to the Adamses' major ideological and moral and political concerns, concerns that remain with us as a country even though the Andrew Jacksons have won. Very well. But the trouble is that those concerns get lost. The filing cabinet triumphs. And this outsider's guess is that it triumphs because no single mere writer was allowed to be in charge.

The Envelope, Please

I take it as one of the signs of my maturity that I no longer wax indignant at the yearly proceedings of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The anger, the outrage, the derision of my youth ("They could give an Oscar to *that*!") has mellowed into a sort of bemused, detached observation. This tranquil state of disinterested loftiness can be easily attained by the learning of one Great Truth: these Academy Awards for the "best achievements" in the motion picture art have nothing to do with bestness, nothing to do with an achievement in motion pictures, and nothing to do with art.

Can you tell me, offhand, which film the Academy thought the "best achievement" of 1959? The year 1959 was extremely interesting for the motion picture art. It was the year in America when you might have seen Bergman's *Wild Strawberries*, Resnais' *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, Truffaut's *The 400 Blows*, Godard's *Breathless*, Ray's *The World of Apu*, Ichikawa's *Fires on the Plain*, and Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*—not to mention Wilder's *Some Like It Hot*, Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* and Clayton's *Room at the Top*. It was probably as pivotal a year in film history as 1915 (*The Birth of a Nation*) and 1927 (*The Jazz Singer*), a year in which the future pictorial styles and thematic values of the movies were indelibly fixed. Without 1959 there would have been no existential rebels in movies, no shooting in natural locations, no hand-held cameras, slow-motion lyricism and freeze-frames, no *Bonnie and Clyde*, *The Wild Bunch*, *Nashville*, *Seven Beauties* or *Taxi Driver*. And so it may surprise you to recall that the Best Picture of 1959 was *Ben-Hur*, a film not only of questionable artistic merit but of absolutely no historical significance whatsoever. Can you tell me, offhand, which of those directors considered

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America's finest movie artists has ever won the Academy Award for best achievement in direction? In *The American Cinema*, Andrew Sarris names 10 Hollywood directors to his Pantheon. Although one can often quibble with some of Sarris' *auteur*istic biases, his Pantheonic assemblage seems a genuinely august body: Charles Chaplin, John Ford, D.W. Griffith, Howard Hawks, Alfred Hitchcock, Buster Keaton, Fritz Lang, Ernst Lubitsch, Josef von Sternberg and Orson Welles. Only one ever won the Award for best achievement in directing: John Ford. He won it four times (*The Informer, The Grapes of Wrath, How Green Was My Valley* and *The Quiet Man*). Interestingly enough, he won it for his tonier, literary films rather than for the native-American westerns for which his admirers most admire him.

Chaplin won two "special" Oscars for his general contribution (one in 1928 for *The Circus* and one in 1972 for Auld Lang Syne), a belated Oscar for his scoring of *Limelight* (in 1974, 22 years after he made the film), but none for his directing (nor for his acting or writing). Howard Hawks may have directed the most impressive representative of almost every American movie *genre*: best prison picture (*The Criminal Code*, 1931), best gangster picture (*Scarface*, 1932), best theater-people picture (*Twentieth Century*, 1934), best screwball comedy (*Bringing Up Baby*, 1938), best newspaper picture (*His Girl Friday*, 1941), best detective picture (*The Big Sleep*, 1946), and best western (*Red River*, 1948). He did not even receive a nomination for any of these pictures (his one nomination was for *Sergeant York* in 1941, which presumably appealed to the Academy voters' sense of patriotism).

Although there is no reason why Academy members cannot have as personal a definition of bestness as anyone, there is a strange consistency in the almost 50 years of their defining bestness. Oscar was born in the late '20s with an inferiority complex; Hollywood begat Oscar to confer artistic respectability on an entertainment product that no one important considered important. The '20s was the decade when "kless" came to the movies. Sid Grauman, Barney Baliban, Sam Katz and Roxy Rothafel built klessy temples for watching and worship, temples that provoked Cole Porter's satirical lyrics in "You're the Top":

You're romance.
You're the Queen of Russia.
You're the pants
On a Roxy ushah.

Louis B. Mayer, with his immigrant roots in the junk business, put together the klessiest film factory in Hollywood. And for its corporate slogan, this man, who could barely read English, came up with a klessy phrase, "*Ars Gratia Artis*," which was Greek to him in several senses.

The Academy Award for best picture of the year has usually gone to the klessiest picture of the year: to historical spectacles (*Gone With the Wind, Ben-Hur, Lawrence of Arabia, A Man for All Seasons*), to literary adaptions (*All Quiet on the Western Front, Mutiny on the Bounty*, the Ford adaptations, *Rebecca, Hamlet, All the King's Men, From Here to Eternity*), to epics in scope, size and cost (*Grand Hotel, The Great Ziegfeld, The Greatest Show on Earth, The Bridge on the River Kwai, Patton*, both *Godfathers*). Social-problem pictures—if the problem were handled klessily and up-liftingly enough—have also been frequent winners (*You Can't Take It With You, Mrs. Miniver, Going My Way, The Lost Weekend, The Best Years of Our Lives, Gentleman's Agreement, In the Heat of the Night*). "Little" pictures have been occasional winners (*It Happened One Night, Casablanca, All About Eve, On the Waterfront, Marty, The French Connection*), as if to prove that even inexpensive, unprepossessing movies can also be klessy.

The pictures that have been largely ignored are our most native, most American, most movie-ish *genre* pictures. No gangster picture has ever won, and the one winning western (*Cimarron*, 1932) was an epic literary adaptation. The first musical to win was *An American in Paris* (1952), a film which signalled the end of the flippantly casual musical. It featured the klessy combination of French impressionism, George Gershwin's symphonic music and a 15-minute ballet. The later musical winners (*Gigi, West Side Story, My Fair Lady, The Sound of Music* and *Oliver*) have all been epic adaptations of Broadway or Broadway-style material. Of the 46 Best Films in Oscar's life, only two (both directed by Frank Capra in the '30s) have been comedies ("pure" comedies rather than comedy-dramas or musical comedies). Of the more than 250 films nominated for Best Picture, fewer than 30 have been comedies. Although American film comedies are among the most vital and imaginative comic creations of our century in any medium,

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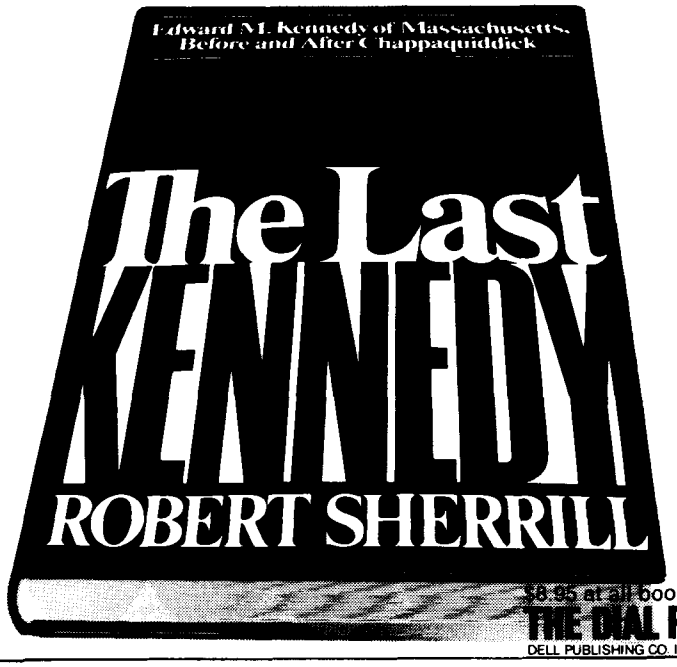

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drama is klessier than comedy.

Kless-consciousness has also dominated the voting for the best performances of each year. Such stage-oriented folks as Emil Jannings, Norma Shearer, Lionel Barrymore, Helen Hayes, Charles Laughton, Luise Rainer, Robert Donat, Greer Garson, Olivia de Havilland, Ronald Colman, Laurence Olivier, Audrey Hepburn, Grace Kelly, Alec Guinness, David Niven, Gregory Peck, Anne Bancroft, Rex Harrison and Paul Scofield have won Oscars. But the four most sensually evocative sex-goddesses to appear on a screen never won: Garbo, Dietrich, Harlow and Monroe. No clown has ever won, perhaps because clowning, like sensuality, is honestly and brashly earthy and vulgar.

The stars who conveyed wit and intelligence have not fared much better. Although both Katharine Hepburn and Bette Davis have been frequent winners, the wonderful verbal snap of Jean Arthur, Barbara Stanwyck, Carole Lombard and Cary Grant, or the casual and easy grace of Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly and Henry Fonda were not. Just as the Academy has felt more comfortable bestowing honor on the movies that aped or adapted the more traditional and uppity literary forms, it has shown deference to stage actors and stage-influenced performers rather than to its own movie stars. The stage folks, despite this idolatry, have not responded warmly to Oscar's advances. George Bernard Shaw called his Oscar for Best Screenplay (*Pygmalion*, 1938) an "insult": "As if they never heard of me before—and it's very likely they never had."

So what good are the Oscars? For one thing, they are very good for the movie business. The Academy Awards television show provides two hours of free advertising for the movie product, advertising that seems like entertainment and not a commercial, advertising for which the auto industry and the soap manufacturers and the frozen-food products are eager to pay for the commercials. The financial results of Oscar's evening can be read in the following week's *Variety* chart of box-office grosses for the winners and nominees.

For another, the Academy Awards "ceremony" is no longer a private, "family" dinner, as it originally was, but a public show, a "media event" that entertains millions and only became possible in the television era (in 1952, to be precise, when television first paid the

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Academy $100,000 for the privilege of telecasting the event). How else could one assemble so many stars, surround them with so much drama and so little protection, and pay so little money for it? The success of the "Academy Awards Show" as an entertainment formula has spawned those other award shows that have also taken to television, many of which did not exist until television took to them: the Tony, the Emmy, the Grammy, the Country-and-Western Music Award (is that called the Twangy?), the Golden Globe, the Comic of the Year Award, the Entertainer of the Year Award, even the Person of the Year Award, for all I know. The obverse of these honorific award shows, clearly one of Oscar's bastard progeny, is the assemblage of stars for the TV "Roast," the very conception of which probably deserves a nomination for television's worst contribution to American culture.

Beyond the money and the media, however, the "Academy Awards Show" is the only one that generates any real excitement, the only one that people (both the nominees and the public) really care about. Despite the shrinking movie audience over the last 30 years, movies and movie stars are still mystical entities; people are still passionately devoted to their movie likes and passionately vehement about their dislikes. This passion accounts for the fact that none of the other arts (except for those Oscar-imitators) would even attempt to assemble a list of its "best achievements" of each year.

When it comes to codifying movie bestness, however, Oscar is not alone. Come late December, every movie-watcher with a half-column of newsprint or 30 seconds of air time at his or her disposal feels compelled to give us a list of the 10 or 20 Best or Worst of the Year. The uppity New York Film Critics give us their communal bests. Even the international film festivals dish out awards for different categories of bestness.

Well, of course, any dope knows that you can't assemble valid lists of achievements in the arts. First, fashions pass, and what seems best today seems not best tomorrow (like *Ben-Hur* in 1959). Second, criteria of accomplishment are complex and contradictory. (For example, how do you compare a brilliant conception that is executed faultily with a banal conception that is executed brilliantly—even if you could agree on such initial evaluations?) And third, who cares? Well, obviously, we all do—since the Oscars, and the Best 10 Lists, and the Film Festival Awards continue to increase and multiply.

The desire to codify bestness serves an emotional, indeed a purgative function—not a practical one. It reveals the genuine reaction of human beings to something they care deeply about. We wish to confirm our personal and private experiences with a film or films, in effect to lift our private experience to the level of truth by public confirmation. There is an almost naive belief in democracy in the process: if we could all agree on an esthetic opinion by means of a vote, then that mere opinion becomes actual truth. There is, in effect, a desire to establish a theology of film by admitting certain films to the liturgy. Several masterpieces of the past have been previously admitted by a kind of common consent (for example, *The Gold Rush, The General, Grand Illusion, Stagecoach, Citizen Kane, Les Enfants du Paradis, Red River*—none of which was ever sanctified by Oscar but by the consensus opinion of a later generation of film critics.) We wish to continue this process in the present since art and theology (unlike so many others) are still so very much alive.

Gerald Mast

Gerald Mast is the author of *The Comic Mind: Comedy and the Movies* (Bobbs-Merrill).

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Books Considered

The Life of Bertrand Russell by Ronald W. Clark

(Knopf; $17.50)

The celebrity which is nowadays so lavishly and instantaneously bestowed often proves to be surprisingly transient. Where Victorian heroes loomed ever larger after decease, with long-winded, adulatory biographies as signposts along the road to posthumous fame, ours have but to turn up their toes to be largely forgotten. When there are adulatory biographies, more often than not they provide an occasion rather for marvelling at a personality cult that is past than for reviving its practice.

Witness Ronald W. Clark's massive tribute to the late Bertrand Russell. I suppose mathematical specialists still have occasion to make honorable mention of his *Principia Mathematica* (written in collaboration with A.N. Whitehead), and students majoring in philosophy to turn over the pages of his *History of Western Philosophy*. No doubt pious nuclear disarmers are liable to look back nostalgically on the great days of the Aldermaston marches, and there may even be aspiring free-lovers, progressive educationalists and anti-God zealots who refresh themselves from time to time by returning to Russell's writings on such themes. Of course, too, his name crops up frequently in memoirs and other documentation, especially relating to the Bloomsbury set, now decidedly in fashion. Here, his frequent stays at Garsington Manor, and intimate relationship with Lady Ottoline Morrell, the presiding goddess, ensures him honorable mention, along with Lytton Strachey, Aldous Huxley, D.H. Lawrence and other frequenters of her court.

Even so, all the way through Clark's well-researched, and well-written tribute to Russell I kept asking myself whether his subject really rated such ample and assiduous treatment. Was Russell, as Clark indomitably insists, a great thinker, a master-mind, a seer, even a rather special kind of near-saint? Or, as I have long believed myself, no more than a quick-witted, excessively randy, displaced earl, who managed to shock his way into being noticed, first academically, then as an authority on shifting contemporary *mores*, and finally, thanks to the joint efforts of the Kremlin and his Svengali-like secretary, Ralph Schoenman, as a figure of world significance in the shaping of foreign policy and the defining of international relations?

My own impression of his polemical writings, in which I have had occasion to browse from time to time, and of his radio and television disputations when I have been a participant, is that his thinking was superficial, his intellectual bigotry fluctuating and often absurd, and his capacity for making irresponsible dogmatic statements, limitless. Indeed, in the light of the inconstancy of his views, the recklessness of his pronouncements on contemporary affairs (he once bet me 20 pounds that Sen. Joseph McCarthy would infallibly be elected President of the United States on the completion of Eisenhower's first term), and his readiness to throw out

Bertrand Russell at Harvard in 1940 ©Boston Globe

highly biased opinions on everything under the sun, from the poet Wordsworth to the Crucifixion, it must be considered extraordinary that he continued to be revered as a man of learning and sagacity.

Here, some observations by Thomas Gray, author of *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*—lines which at one time all schoolboys were expected to learn by heart—on how Lord Shaftesbury came to have philosophical credentials, may be relevant. They are quoted in Dr. Johnson's incomparable *Lives of the English Poets*:

> *You say you cannot conceive how Lord Shaftesbury came to be a philosopher in vogue; I will tell you. First, he was a lord; secondly, he was as vain as any of his readers; thirdly, men are very prone to believe what they do not understand; fourthly, they will believe anything at all provided they are under no obligation to believe it; fifthly, they love to take a new road even when that road leads nowhere; sixthly, he was reckoned a fine writer, and seemed always to mean more than he said. Would you have any more reasons? An interval of above forty years has pretty well destroyed the charm. A dead lord ranks with commoners; vanity is no longer interested in the matter; for a new road has become an old one.*

It seems to me to fit Russell like a glove, and will surely seem even more apposite by the year 2010 when he will have been dead 40 years.

It is greatly to Clark's credit that, while maintaining his attitude of awed reverence for Russell's gifts and attainments, as far as can be seen he makes no effort to fake the evidence. This would, in any case, have been a difficult, and even risky, undertaking in view of Russell's relentless, if not shameless, candor about himself in his autobiography; particularly regarding his non-stop amours, whether at the elevated level of his long love-affair with Lady Ottoline, and, later, with Colette (Lady Constance Malleson), or of his persistent efforts to lure female admirers, the younger the better, into his bed. Not to mention his four marriages.

The long tale of his conquests, faithfully monitored by Clark, must be considered remarkable, especially in view of his scrawny appearance; the receding chin, the squeaky voice, the simian features and other intimations of biological exhaustion. Even Lady Ottoline, who, in the light of her Garsington clientèle, cannot be credited with undue squeamishness, complained

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of Russell's "lack of physical attraction, the lack of charm and gentleness and sympathy." Fame, it has been justly remarked, is a great aphrodisiac—a saying which doubtless goes far to account for Russell's notable success with what used in pre-lib days to be called the fair sex. In Lady Ottoline's case an additional impediment was that Russell was a sufferer from pyorrhea, which, he explains, marred their physical transports. Returning from a visit to America, he was able to assure her that he had been cured of his distressing complaint, as well as passing on to her a detailed account of his seduction of Helen Dudley, the young daughter of an eminent gynecologist who acted as his host during a stay in Chicago. While the seduction was proceeding, he tells us, Helen's three sisters obligingly "mounted guard to give warning if either of the parents approached."

It was scarcely a Tristan and Isolde situation, but one which, as described in his letter, served, along with the purification of his mouth, to reactivate his sexual relations with Lady Ottoline, for the enjoyment of which they repaired every Tuesday to Burnham Beeches for the day. Poor Helen Dudley, arriving in London in the middle of this rerun of an old idyll, was given a sharp brush-off by Russell on the specious grounds that, as the 1914-18 war had just broken out, and he proposed to take a leading part in opposing it, a liasion such as he had proposed in Chicago was inadmissible. "The shock of the war," Russell writes of the affair in his autobiography, "killed my passion for her, and I broke her heart." Subsequently, he goes on, she "fell a victim to a rare disease, which first paralyzed her, and then made her insane," and concludes, in a truly philosophical vein: "If the war had not intervened, the plan which we formed in Chicago might have brought great happiness to us both."

The episode confirms something Leonard Woolf told me once *à propos* Russell—that the trouble with him was that he was utterly heartless. He just does not seem to have had any true feelings about individual people, which may explain why, on the one hand, he continued into old age writing mawkish adolescent love-letters, and, on the other, became so ardent a propagandist for humanitarian causes. As Swift pointed out, those who are most concerned about humanity seldom care much about Tom, Dick and Harry. Thus Russell, who worked himself into a lather of frenzy even in his 80s and 90s lest the men in the Pentagon or the Kremlin should blow us and our little earth to smithereens, was liable in his most intimate personal relationships to display an almost unearthly callousness.

In this respect, he may be seen as a sort of companion-piece to D.H. Lawrence; as Russell out of his inhumanity forged his mighty championship of humanity, so Lawrence out of his impotence forged his mighty championship of potency. The cold-hearted earl, following in the tradition of his famous grandfather, Lord John Russell, known as Radical Jack, became a sort of People's Totem, as the impotent Nottingham miner's son became the equivalent People's Phallus. It was in Cambridge that these two gimcrack prophets of our time were brought together. Initially, they showered one another with compliments and planned future collaboration, but their spheres of interest overlapped too much for harmonious relations to prove durable, and soon they were screaming insults. Lawrence was able to get in a fell blow with one of the characters in *Women In Love*—Sir Joshua Malleson, "a learned, dry baronet who was always making witticisms and laughing at them heartily in a harsh horse-laugh." Russell weighed in two decades later with a ferocious attack on Lawrence broadcast by the BBC, and may be said to have won on points.

Disagreement with Clark's evaluation of Russell, now and in the eyes of posterity, does not preclude appreciation of his conscientious biographical labors. His book contains much interesting material and many fascinating tid-bits of Russelliana. For instance, that, while staying at Garsington, Russell bitterly resented Lady Ottoline's readiness to allow Aldous Huxley into her bedroom when she was changing when he was debarred from this particular delight. Again, that when Russell's second wife, Dora, while still technically married to him, gave birth to a daughter by an American journalist, Griffin Barry, Russell went to great lengths to ensure that the child, though legally bearing his name, should not appear in Debrett's *Peerage*. There is also an interesting account of Russell's curious relationship with Ludwig Wittgenstein, the crazed Austrian homosexual, reputedly a philosophical genius, who, like the egregious Schoenman, seems for a while to have totally dominated him.

Russell was in the habit of saying that he would most have liked to live in the years before the French Revolution as a compatriot of Voltaire and the Encyclopaedists. One can quite see why—enjoying the fun of preparing a revolution but departing this world before the tumbrils called. Instead, it was his fate to live into and after the Russian Revolution. He visited the new Soviet regime in the very early days, in 1920, and reached the conclusion that it was "a close tyrannical bureaucracy, with a spy system more elaborate and terrible than the Tsar's . . . No vestige of liberty remains, in thought or speech or action. I was stifled and oppressed by the weight of the machine as by a cope of lead." In his book *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism* he wrote about the regime in this strain, in splendid contrast with the sycophantic and abysmally credulous reactions of other intellectuals like Shaw, the Webbs, Gide, Barbusse, etc. etc. Yet before even Russell's words were printed, on his way to China, when his fellow-passengers asked him to speak about Russia, he felt bound to say "only favorable things about the Soviet Government."

It was the ultimate *Trashion des clercs*, and epitomizes what was to be the practice of the flower of our Western

Alan Watts
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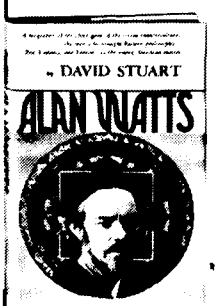

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intelligentsia in the tumultuous years to come, whereby they have been instrumental in undermining and invalidating all the values and aspirations they purported to be upholding, in the process, incidentally, abolishing themselves. In this sense, Russell may be seen as the foremost intellectual of his time, and also the last of the genus; the voice of one crying in the wilderness to make straight the way for the outpouring of meaningless words and the repetition of mindless slogans which lay ahead.

Malcolm Muggeridge

Malcolm Muggeridge's most recent book is *Jesus* (Harper & Row).

Presidential Elections Fourth Edition by Nelson W. Polsby and Aaron Wildavsky

(Scribner's; $8.95, 4.95 paper)

That we are undergoing substantial changes in the workings of our political parties and the process of nominating and electing a President is a proposition agreed to these days by practically everyone who follows American politics at all closely. The evidence is all around. To begin with, the older party coalitions have crumbled. Not only are there fewer voters with strong attachments to either party, but the party followings themselves have changed. The Democratic party has gained among the educated and better-off strata but it has lost support among blue collar workers. As several observers have recently pointed out, the Democratic party at the moment has something of a top-bottom following, with grave weakness in the middle.

While partisan loyalties have declined in strength, policy questions and ideological beliefs have become more influential among political activists and voters. Since they made their spectacular debut among Goldwater's supporters in 1964, political amateurs, often new to politics and frequently moved by strong ideological impulses, have come to rival and often to displace the influence on nominations of party regulars and professionals. Changes like these may be partly related to another crucial change that is too often overlooked: the enormous rise in the average educational level of the electorate over the past 20 years. Youthful and dedicated amateurs have also profited from changes in party rules governing representation at the conventions, particularly in the Democratic party. Ironically, the result of the first application of these rules in 1972 was a Democratic convention made up of delegates who, as later research has shown, were probably more out of line with the views of rank and file Democrats, and in this sense more unrepresentative, than the delegates to any other convention in living memory. Of course, the Democratic coalition, which looks impressive in congressional elections and surveys on party loyalty, has long been something of a paper tiger in presidential elections; after all, since FDR's death the Democratic candidate has won only three out of seven elections. In fact, as late as January of this year, Gallup reported that Ford and Reagan each strongly outpolled both Humphrey and Muskie. A quarter or more of the people who called themselves Democrats said they'd vote for either Republican against either Democrat. This is "the party of the majority?"

A further consequence of the new rules has been to increase the number of primaries. As Nelson Polsby and Aaron Wildavsky point out, in 1968 only 15 states selected delegates by primary, while in 1972 23 states did so. If my count is right, this year presidential primaries will be held in 29 states and the District of Columbia. In 1968, only a bit more than a third of the delegates were selected in primaries; this year they will be the preponderant majority. Because the primaries increase the demand for volunteers who will help to get out the vote, they further heighten the role of the amateur as against the professional.

There is also, of course, the brand-new system of campaign financing, which few observers doubt will have, indeed is already having, significant consequences—even thought what these are is by no means entirely clear.

As if all these changes weren't confusing enough to people who had thought they knew something about the "rules of American politics," we're now witnessing unprecedented pre-convention contests in both parties. Neither party has ever fielded a set of contestants anything like as big as the collection of Democrats who have been seriously campaigning so far this year. Even the Republicans are out to confound the experts. "Barring catastrophic events—depression, war, scandal—the president's power is most certainly strong enough," Polsby and Wildavsky write, "to assure him of renomination within the limits imposed by the anti-third term (the 22nd) amendment to the Constitution." Surely they are basically correct, and their generalization may well hold up even this time around; yet the fact that as I write it is still a bit *uncertain* whether Ford can knock off Reagan does run flatly counter to precedent.

It was never easy to make sense out of the complex process by which we manage to get ourselves a President. If the process is puzzling to many Americans, it has often been downright baffling to foreigners. Because complexity has now been compounded by rapid

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changes, it is even harder to get a grip on what is happening. We can therefore be grateful to two eminent political scientists at Berkeley, Nelson Polsby and Aaron Wildavsky, for their quadrennial effort to set us straight. Someone could probably write a fair history of recent American politics simply by noting the changes from one edition of their book (which now appears in its fourth edition) to the next.

As in previous editions, the authors focus first on "the strategic environment," by which they mean the main participants in the process and their most important resources such as money, information and incumbency (which, although an advantage to the President, tends in their view to be something of a liability to a Vice President). They then go on to describe, analyze and evaluate the process of nomination prior to the convention, the convention itself, and the campaign. They conclude with an extended discussion of proposed reforms and a final chapter on how the process bears on democracy. As guides they are highly informative, sometimes witty, and never dull. They are also up-to-date, at least as of last August when they sent the revision off to the printers, and at the same time fully in touch with the most recent research. Throughout they do not hesitate to make and defend judgments about the process and recent or proposed changes in it.

In a book that has been newly dedicated to the memory of the late Alexander Bickel, it should come as no surprise to find judgments that often run counter to what passes for current liberal opinion. Like Bickel, they are liberals who frequently find themselves at odds with what they regard as prevalent misconceptions among their liberal friends. The book is strewn with such challenges. For example, they don't think the influence of money in campaigns is quite as serious as it is often made out to be. Money, they conclude, doesn't "buy election victories. The candidate and party with the most money do not always win. . . . Nor does there seem to be a correlation between the amount of money spent and the extent of electoral victory in national elections."

They are quite hard on "political purists," who emerged as a crucial force among the supporters of Goldwater in 1964, McCarthy in 1968, and McGovern in 1972. In their view, purists tend to maintain their political purity at the price of political ineffectuality. By cultivating defeat, in the end purists contribute more to exacerbating conflicts and less to getting their principles translated into law and policy than the "professionals," who reduce conflict in order to win elections and, by winning elections, help their candidate to carry out at least some of his policies.

They also take a dim view of the idea that our parties ought to be primarily advocates of policy. "The question is whether our parties will remain agencies seeking office through maintaining consensus or will become organizations purely of policy advocacy. Every party must do—and does—some of each: reconcile conflicting interests and advocate policies. But how much of each? The balance has been altered in favor of advocacy to the detriment of consensus. There would be no drastic difficulty in this if it were not that the policy positions advocated by party activists tend to be popular with party activists but unpopular with most other people. Thus, the renominating process threatens to produce candidates who appeal to delegates but not to voters. This happened to the Democrats in 1972 and the Republicans in 1964. If our national parties no longer aspire to perform the integrative function of keeping the country together, what agencies will?"

I find myself wondering how they are going to treat the 1976 campaign in the fifth edition—which surely we must hope for. Concerns growing out of the turmoil of the 1960s and the Democratic disaster of 1972 may not prove to be quite appropriate to this campaign year. My hunch is that, though it continues to exhibit the pell-mell process of change, this year presents a different combination of factors. We are seeing an unprecedented degree of fragmentation but also a lot of pragmatic and even opportunistic searching for that big dividend of votes thought to be available by investing in appeals to the center. The fragmentation doesn't seem to me to be caused so much by political purism and advocacy of policy at the expense of compromise as by the political ambitions of a large number of unusually able aspirants. Most of them occupy rather similar and more or less centrist positions on most issues. The extremists, Reagan and Wallace, seem rather devoid of deep policy commitments; they convey passionate conviction without really feeling it. Both look to me like shrewd, calculating "professionals," not "purists," who would without the least embarrassment adopt any policy position they thought would improve their chances. Closer in, I'd find it hard to say which is more the political purist, which the more professional—Udall or Jackson. Harris' appeal may be closer to the kind of advocacy Polsby and Wildavsky have in mind; but those of us who like what he says, as I do, seem to be pitifully few and resigned to the prospect that he won't last the course.

It just may be that social learning does occur. Republicans may have learned enough from 1964 and Democrats enough from 1972 to recognize that the consolations of political purity are a poor match for the rewards of victory.

Robert A. Dahl

Robert A. Dahl is Sterling Professor of Political Science at Yale. His most recent book is *Regimes & Oppositions* (Yale University Press).

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The Accountability Of Power: Toward a Responsible Presidency by Sen. Walter F. Mondale

(McKay; $12.50)

"The men who create power make an indispensable contribution to the Nation's greatness," President Kennedy once remarked, "but the men who question power make a contribution just as indispensable, especially when that questioning is disinterested, for they determine whether we use power or power uses us." Like most Presidents, Kennedy was more adept at articulating principles than adhering to them, and this case was no exception: he contributed to the growth of unquestioned—and hence unchecked—power in the White House which ultimately led to Watergate.

In his book, *The Accountability of Power*, Walter F. Mondale, the senior US senator from Minnesota, provides that disinterested questioning of power which the country so desperately needs and so often lacks. Here is a readable, direct exposition of how the presidency evolved from an executive of limited powers to a hydra-headed monster that, under Richard Nixon, showed nothing but scorn for any attempted check—whether institutional, social or moral—of its actions.

In Mondale's view, it is vital to understand how this presidential metamorphosis occurred: "unless we deal effectively with the causes of these Presidential excesses, we may well see them happen again." He thus explores the myths, attitudes and political practices which lie behind those presidential excesses. And he discusses specific measures to help ensure that the risk of their recurrence is minimized.

The "most important single reform" in Mondale's view is the campaign spending law enacted by Congress last year. This law limits political contributions, subsidizes presidential campaigns with federal funds, and, in general, reduces the candidate's dependence on the "fat cats" who have so dominated campaigns—and political corruption—in the past.

But Mondale does not see this new law as a singular panacea. Quite the contrary. He recognizes the complexity of presidential power and reviews numerous other proposals to remedy the problem. As an example, he correctly concludes that presidential tyranny has been facilitated by the President's uncontested control over the nation's airwaves, particularly television. The President can secure simultaneous and free network coverage to discuss anything he wants, at any time he wants, for as long as he wants, and in any format he wants. "The President sits in isolated splendor," Mondale writes, "with the umbilical cord of television connecting him directly with a hundred million homes. And, perhaps most enviable from the presidential perspective, the opposition party and the Congress have no effective means of replying." To change this situation, Mondale recommends broadcasting of congressional debates, automatic television time to the opposition party in Congress to respond to the President, and greater protection for broadcasters who fear an angry President may cause them to lose the federal FCC licenses they need to operate.

Mondale's other proposals include the establishment of a legal counsel for Congress so that legislators will not have to depend on the executive to defend their prerogatives in court; creation of a "public attorney," judicially appointed and confirmed by the Senate, who would investigate executive corruption; and a procedure requiring cabinet members to engage in regular question-and-answer periods with congressional members on the floors of the Senate and House (a procedure comparable to that commonly employed in parliamentary democracies).

Although many of Mondale's proposals are thoughtful and even provocative, the book lacks serious analysis. There is no original research, and the book avoids many of the difficult questions whose answers may show the proposals to be unworkable or even undesirable. Thus, Mondale quite rightly asserts that Congress must improve its oversight of the FBI, the CIA and other intelligence agencies; but he offers very little guidance as to how Congress can guarantee itself the information it needs to do the job or, perhaps more significantly, whether past failures in congressional oversight reveal an inherent institutional weakness which will not be cured simply by the creation of another committee.

This is most unfortunate. Having served in the Senate for more than 10 years, Mondale is in a position to explain much about the human dimensions of institutional failures in our political system. Important human angles nonetheless receive insufficient attention.

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What is it about the congressional personality, for instance, that causes most senators and congressmen—even the most liberal—to shy away from challenging a President's judgment? (Here I cannot help but recall Sen. Humphrey's comment that most congressmen wouldn't have minded Nixon's repeated impoundment of social program funds if only he had had the personal courtesy to give the congressmen prior notice of impoundments that affected their constituents.) Similarly, what professional pressures cause journalists to give credence to presidential statements—as they did for Nixon's in the 1972 presidential campaign—when the President refuses to meet with the press and answer some hard questions about his past actions and present policies?

In short, this book offers little insight into the passion, the arrogance, the intelligence, the greed, the prejudice, the caution, and the plain stupidity which are the guts and blood of our body politic. And without that insight, one walks away from the book sensing that the ideas are sound—but wondering whether they could make a difference.

Lewis J. Paper

Lewis J. Paper, formerly legislative counsel to a US Senator, is author of *The Promise and the Performance: The Leadership of John F. Kennedy* (Crown).

Shakespeare and the Revolution of the Times by Harry Levin

(Oxford University Press; $15)

Modern communications has made the museum without walls into something more like a zoo holding all the creatures, great and small, bizarre and banal, spawned by modern culture. Films, recordings, television and satellites have created an artificial world culture indifferent to languages and national boundaries and penetrating even those countries that try to keep it out by censorship. In "The Primacy of Shakespeare," one of the longer essays in this collection, Harry Levin traces the growth of Shakespeare's international reputation. Ben Jonson knew in 1623 that "he was not of an age, but for all time," and Walter Savage Landor added that he is "not our poet but the world's." Today this is literally true. Shakespeare is performed on every continent and in most of the known languages. More than a literary monument, he is a living contemporary influence, as witness *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *Throne of Blood*. The medium of film has extended his audience far beyond the theatre and the major cities, and given him a 20th-century equivalent of the audience at the Globe—uncounted millions of modern groundlings. Shakespeare is a classic of the new culture being created by the media because this culture is based almost entirely on sight and sound, and Shakespeare's plays were written to be seen and heard.

One of the most attractive features of these essays is their suggestiveness. They constantly beckon beyond the immediate subject to larger questions. A remark in the title essay concerning the difference between Brutus and Hamlet on suicide suggests a whole range of contrasts between the moral worlds of the Roman and Christian tragedies and raises the question of whether Shakespeare's sense of history was not in some way better articulated than our own. An essay contrasting Ben Jonson and Shakespeare points the difference in terms of the attitudes of the two dramatists toward monsters. Shakespeare's Caliban is human, all too human, is spite of his deformity. Jonson banned monsters from his plays because he felt the dramatist should imitate nature, but his characters are monstrously one-sided and dominated by obsessions. Ironically, Jonson's rationalist quest for nature produces an art that is far less human than Shakespeare's fantasy.

Levin's remarkable command of detail is evident throughout. An essay on Shakespeare's use of proper names moves through a dazzling litany of examples, etymologies, associations and parallels enriched by comparisons with Ben Jonson, Henry Fielding, Charles Dickens and Henry James—among others. Eight of the essays treat individual plays. Falstaff's lack of a horse at Gadshill engenders a survey of the imagery of horses in Shakespeare together with speculations about whether real horses were ever used on the Elizabethan stage. (Rarely.) An inquiry into Othello's motives leads to a discussion about the nature of tragedy. Gloucester's attempted suicide in *King Lear* is read as an object lesson for Shakespeare's audience in the need to endure life without the help of Providence.

A few of Levin's ideas seem dated. He appears to accept the inner stage and balcony of the traditional Globe reconstruction, although both have been questioned in studies by Richard Hosley, Donald Rowan and others. He endorses the theory that the popular audience of the Globe had a decisive influence on Shakespeare's style, although this widely held theory has been qualified by Glynne Wickham. The Globe audience kept Shakespeare's company afloat financially; but without their noble—later, royal—patrons, the English companies could not have performed at all. The dramatists had to write with their patrons, as well as their paying customers, in mind, even as modern companies have to consider the tastes of their financial backers. In addition, the plays were written with the knowledge that they might be performed later at court—another reason to restrain the impulse to cater to the groundlings.

As a regular theatregoer, Levin is aware that Shakespeare has to be seen in relation to the living stage, but is suspicious of the search for novelty: "Given the widespread assumption that the successful director is a man who can compose the wildest variations of the themes with which Shakespeare provides him, there would seem to be no limits to the display of such ingenuity." Stratford, Connecticut fills him with Timon-like disgust: "That annual record of shortsighted bungling and heavy-handed bumbling which has made the American Shakespeare Festival little more than a cultural embarrassment." (*This was written in 1964, but it stands* in the 1976 collection; presumably nothing has happened since 1964 to change Levin's opinion.) Peter Brook's *Lear* is attacked for using "the similarity—which no one before Mr. [Jan] Kott had ever thought of—to Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*." On the positive side, Levin praises the Stratford, Ontario, festival and the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis. He offers an interesting guess about what makes theatre work: "No amount of expensive professionalism can equal a small band of amateurs with a purpose . . . such as the Dublin writers who founded the Abbey Theatre or those Americans who converted a rickety wharf at Provincetown into a playhouse." Maybe. But the success of amateurs depends on their willingness to behave like professionals, and on cash, which gets

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back to patronage and various modern equivalents of the nobles Shakespeare had to please along with the groundlings.

A brief autobiography is worked into the introduction. Levin's achievements as an explicator of Joyce, and as a critic of the French novel, of 19th-century American literature, and of Shakespeare and Marlowe are so commanding that it comes as a delightful surprise to see him as a boy in high school spending the summer reading Shakespeare aloud with a favorite teacher. A portrait of George Lyman Kittredge will not enhance the reputation of that formidable Harvardian but speaks volumes about the teaching of literature in the 1920s and '30s; while Levin's tribute to Elmer Edgar Stoll reminds us how much we owe him, even though his books are now mostly forgotten.

These essays are not literary essays in the manner of T.S. Eliot or Lionel Trilling. Most of them were written for meetings of scholars or for professional journals. Levin takes us into the library, but the reading room is breezy and well-lighted and filled with old friends. At their best his essays sparkle with ideas. They are a reminder that academic writing does not have to be dull, and that some professors still have lively and important things to say to readers beyond the ivory tower.

O.B. Hardison

O.B. Hardison is director of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington.

The Revolutionary Left In Spain, 1914-1923 by Gerald H. Meaker

(Stanford University Press; $18.95)

Writing in 1938, Orwell predicted that Communism had no future among Spanish workers. It was a reasonable mistake; what the Communists actually had was no past. There was no sizeable tradition of Bolshevism before the civil war in Spain, and in the cavernous history of the revolutionary Left no striking antecedent for a Bolshevik-type party. Early Bolshevism came from outside and failed to catch hold. The Communist party "virtually succumbed in infancy," this study of the Left before Primo de Rivera's dictatorship shows; such, anyway, were its formative years.

What makes this remarkable is not only the Communist party's subsequent importance (especially today, when the situation is not so peculiar as during the civil war), but also the circumstances of its birth, which were uniquely favorable. The Russian Revolution aroused a mass fervor in Spain surpassing the response in any other country. Word of Russian events, rumor actually, was enough to launch large-scale rural insurrections and set labor trembling with revolutionary agitation. A Bolshevism craze—before anyone knew what Bolshevism was—swept the revolutionary Left, which is to say nearly the whole organized working class.

But none of this did the small number of real Communists any good, for once the Russian hubbub died down, the big organizations of the Left took their leave of Moscow and went their own un-Bolshevik ways. Gerald Meaker attributes this failure of Communism to Spain's general backwardness, by which a modern ideology like Leninism was rejected in favor of old-style Socialist thinking, both anarchist and Marxist. But whether this was backward or forward on the part of the Spanish Left, the issues that emerge from Meaker's account of factional strife and party conventions have been long-standing ones in Spain: old questions of democracy, syndicalism, and dictatorship.

The largest arena for the clash with Bolshevism was the National Confederation of Labor (CNT) whose ideology derived from another Russian, Bakunin. The CNT was powerfully drawn to the Russian Revolution and especially to the Bolsheviks, who seemed at first like a Russian version of anarchosyndicalism. The CNT shared with the Bolsheviks a ferocious hostility to all of bourgeois society, a contempt for parliamentary democracy and an instinctive pacifism during the world war. The Bolshevik Revolution looked at first like what the CNT had in mind for Spain: expropriation of the land and the factories and self-government by the masses. The Spaniards were elated. Delegates were dispatched and the labor federation pledged itself to join the Comintern.

But at heart, the CNT was a far cry from Bolshevism. Its organizational structure reversed Lenin's: it was mass, decentralized, and with little formal hierarchy. A membership that reached 700,000 in 1919, the peak year before the revolution of 1936, maintained virtually no paid officers or staff, apart from a few newspaper editors and those hired pistoleros who infested Spanish labor wars (and who tended to dominate one wing of the CNT). There was little discipline, in the sense of obeying leaders, especially moderate leaders. The small groups within the federation guarded their autonomy and internal democracy. When they acted in unison, it was on the basis of solidarity, not discipline. Too much solidarity for their own good, sometimes, for every strike harbored a tendency to explode into a general strike, and every general strike into a revolution, adverse conditions notwithstanding. The political principles of this unruly federation (beginning with "All power is synonymous with tyranny") could scarcely have contradicted Bolshevism more. The CNT goal of libertarian Communism derived from Bakunin's critique of bureaucratic Socialism, and instead of nationalization under party dictatorship, called for workers' self-management of industry and voluntary collectivization in the countryside, all to be coordinated by what amounted to a democracy of workers' councils or of free producers' unions.

Bolshevism, when the CNT got a better look, was plainly not that. As early as 1921 the anarchosyndicalists broke with Soviet Russia and repudiated it as a new form of tyranny. It represented to them merely "a new industrial bourgeoisie in the making, who, in time, will resemble that of Europe as one egg does another." In the face of this conclusion, which was so deeply rooted in the CNT's history and ideals, the handful of Communists and Soviet sympathizers could make little progress. The syndicalist mainstream of the Left would make no concessions.

Bolshevism fared better among the Socialists, who split twice over the Russian question and lost some of their ablest leaders to the new movement. But

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the bulk of the Socialist Workers Party, centered around the patriarchal figure of Pablo Iglesias, held firm, devoted to the "Pablist" doctrines of party unity, "revolutionary-reformism", which meant revolutionary goals by way of reformist tactics, and parliamentary democracy, which in the Spanish context was both a reformist tactic and a revolutionary goal. Meaker observes that the Socialist insistence on parliamentarism was sometimes quixotic. But nevertheless parliamentarism was the Socialist tradition; there was neither a syndicalist nor a Blanquist current within the party to challenge it. When Socialist delegates reached Russia, it struck them as undemocratic. Admirable, but not for them.

The decision to remain aloof from Russia was not easy, and for a moment it looked as if the Socialists would join the Comintern as a party. But they didn't, and the result for the Spanish Left as a whole—split as it was between Socialists and anarchosyndicalists—was an agreement on one point: the Soviet Union was no model for Spanish revolution. Proletarian socialism, whether Marxist or Bakuninist, could not take the form of a dictatorial state—and this, not Bolshevism, was the old tradition of the Spanish Left.

Meaker's history of the Left is a kind of negative plate of the early Communist party: missed potential, stunted growth. The Communist overcoming of these failures is another story. But it is interesting to observe how little the syndicalist and democratic urges have disappeared: in fact, the Communist party's current Italian-style commitment to parliamentarism, and its tolerance of syndicalist-like autonomy in the workers commissions movement, both suggest an appropriation of these hostile ideologies. Not that the CPE's rivals have lost all appeal in the working class. The Socialists have reconstituted a part of their union structure, though how big a part is uncertain, and the anarchosyndicalists, diminished and badly splintered as they are, reportedly still retain influence in Catalonian labor circles and possibly elsewhere. Nor has the Communist appropriation of these currents been anywhere near complete. It does not extend, for instance, to the past: Carillo recently defended the Communist suppression of the revolutionary Left during the Civil War, which is sure to rekindle old and very bitter hatreds. History will remain a problem for the Communists, now that they have won such great influence: the past, except for the very recent past, is not one of the party's assets.

Paul Berman

Paul Berman is editor of *Quotations from the Anarchists* (Praeger).

The Back of The Book

1602 Pennsylvania Avenue

None but a few Philadelphians has seen *1602 Pennsylvania Avenue* yet, but from their response and the response of theater critics, the first collaboration between Alan Jay Lerner and Leonard Bernstein has some wrinkles to iron before fulfilling its forecast as "the musical to end all musicals." As a result, the date of its opening at the Kennedy Center in Washington has been pushed back from March 17 to March 19 to March 24, and now to March 31, so as not to conflict with the opening of *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue* on the 24th. If these postponements have made the producers jittery, they have only tripled the excitement of anticipation in the nation's capital. Opening night has been sold out for three years since Lerner was first inspired to write the show by his outrage at Watergate.

Roger L. Stevens, chairman of the Kennedy Center, and co-producer of *1602*, said that the play is much improved now because "it's getting away from that heavy-handed stuff." Stevens probably was referring either to Raymond Massey's Third Act recitation of the names of all the cabinet members since Madison, or the nine minute prayer by Peter Marshall (played by Alfred Drake) that opens the play. The first has been replaced by a Louisiana hay-ride and a reprise by Carol Lawrence of the show's main love song, "All the Stuff You Are," and the second by a snappy full chorus song and dance to a tune about a southwestern state that starts with OK and ends with "all right."

The stars of *1602 Pennsylvania Avenue* naturally have been upset by the delays. Ethel Merman and Pearl Bailey, who play the steamboat captains, and Mitzi Gaynor and Kathryn Grayson who play them as youngsters are afraid that the public will lose patience with the $900,000 production. Dick Powell, down with mono, cannot handle the middle range of his solo, "The Forgotten Man." Mary Martin (her "My Heart Belongs to Papa" is said to bring down the house) and Abe Burrows, who play Mayor and Mrs. LaGuardia, have left town indefinitely, as have Gwen Verdon, John Raitt, David Wayne, Ezio Pinza, Stubby Kaye, James Coco, Edie Adams and Rex Harrison. The only troupers in the cast are the leads, Ethel Waters and Don Ameche, whose duets, "Huggable You" and "You're Only in Love" kept the chorus line from walking out.

The show has had legal problems as well, though most of these have been cleared up. The most unpleasant occurred over the lyrics of a transition number, "I'm Going to Wash That Guy Right Out of My Hair," which begins

I'm going to wash that guy right
out of my hair
I'm going to wash that guy right
out of my hair
I'm going to wash that guy right
out of my hair,
And send him on his way.

These lyrics were contested by attorneys for Rodgers and Hammerstein on the grounds that they resemble the words of "I'm Going to Wash that *Man* Right Out of My Hair" in *South Pacific*. But the issue was settled when the producers of *1602* pointed out that their song has nothing to do with a Pacific island but pertains to a strike at a pajama factory.

The teenage gang war that closes Act III has stirred some resentment among social workers. The show's touchy scenes are evidently more than offset, however, by the lovable machinations of the leprechaun Flannigan, Ray Bolger's croon-and-dance of "Once in Love with Annie," and the striptease, "Let We Entertain You" performed by Fanny Brice and the Trapp children. No one as yet is seriously worried that *1602* will not straighten itself out. Lerner and Bernstein said it: "It's a sad day for the American musical theater when you can't rewrite a line or two without everyone yelling 'flop.'"

It would be a more than a sad day for

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northwest Washington if *1602* did not open. Invitations to the opening night gala (the birthday of Georgetown Club owner Tongsun Park, perhaps not coincidentally) have already been mailed, and the story of the celebration has been written for the "Style" section of *The Washington Post*. Marshal Tito, Anthony Eden and E. Power Biggs were there, or will be, along with Erskine Caldwell, Chou En-lai and the Secretary of Agriculture, feisty Earl Butz. But all heads turned, or will turn, at the entrance of Jacqueline Onassis. Looking neither to the left nor right, yet smiling her amazing enigmatic smile, she walked, or will walk, past the receiving line in which editor Ben Bradlee, diplomat Alejandro Orfila, socialite Page Lee Hufty, hairdresser Jean-Pierre Safarti, ambassador Ardeshir Zahedi, painter Jamie Wyeth, columnist Art Buchwald, coordinator Joan Braden and White House photographer David Kennerly stared, or will stare, admiringly forward.

Sally Quinn's 5000 words essay on Gertrude Lawrence (who plays Kate in the show) is scheduled for the same "Style" issue. The article reveals that Miss Lawrence is not as beautiful as she was 40 years ago, and is "a little perplexed" about women's lib. She sits in four distinct positions during the nine-hour interview. Miss Lawrence hopes that everybody will like her, and that nobody will spread scandal against her.

Quinn's own part in *1602* is believed to mark the first time a journalist has covered and performed in a musical comedy in the same evening. Secretary Kissinger's cameo role as Arthur is definitely a first, as is the city-wide sing-along that closes *1602*. The sound of 750,000 people belting "You'll Never Walk By Yourself" may provide the single most moving moment of the Bicentennial year. Such elements are but a few reasons that the waiting period for the show has been tolerable. As Noel Coward told Lawrence O'Brien the other night, "For *1602*, I could wait forever."

Roger Rosenblatt

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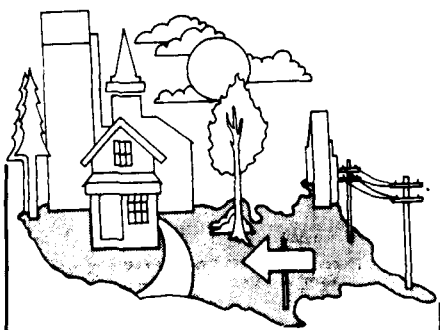

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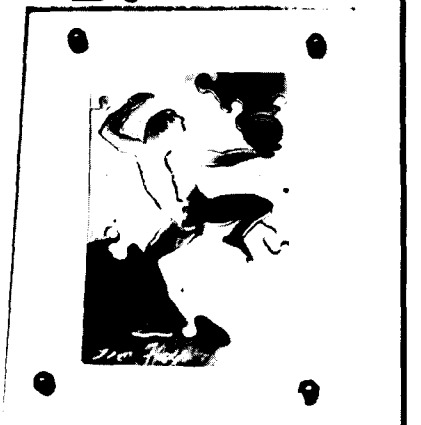

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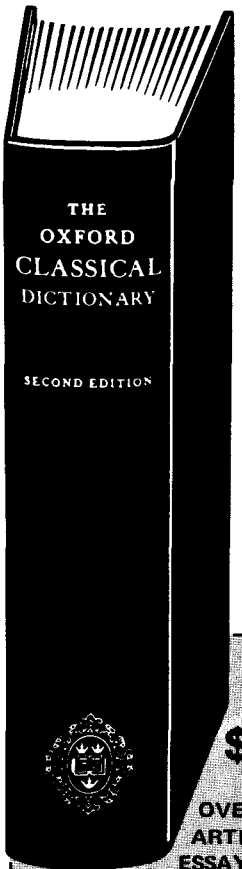

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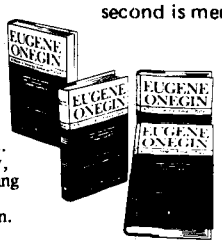

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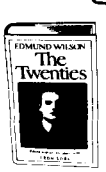

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